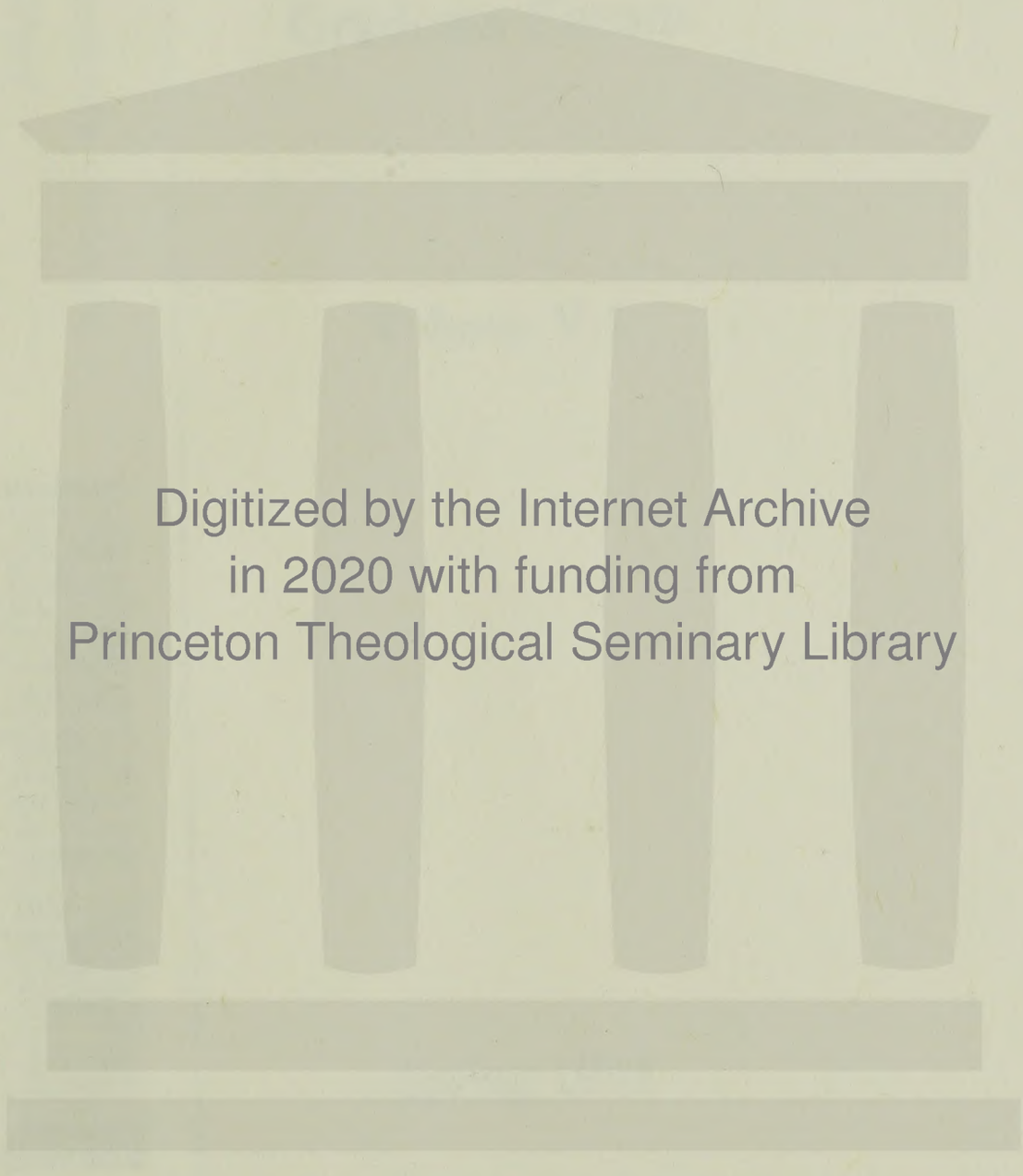

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Editorial

What motivates people to keep on working for social justice, especially when there seems to be no end to the suffering brought on by oppression? Are we actually to hope for an eschatological day when a transcendent God will intervene decisively in human history and justice will be accomplished? Or does such futuristic hope actually pull people *away* from addressing human needs in the here and now? What propels the work of social justice for those who have rejected all possibility of an eschatological "day of the Lord?"

These and other such questions formed the heart of the 1992 Koinonia Graduate Forum held on the campus of Princeton Theological Seminary last fall. The central paper examining these issues was offered by Cynthia L. Rigby: "Is There Joy Before Morning? 'Dangerous Memory' in the Work of Sharon Welch and Johann Baptist Metz."

For Metz and Welch, the motivation required to keep on working for social justice when suffering seems endless is achieved through the work of "dangerous memory." As those who are oppressed "remember" their suffering, they begin both to reclaim their selfhood and to celebrate their new-found place in the community. As those who have oppressed "remember" what they have done, they are moved to a repentance characterized more by freedom than by shame. The joy of living humanly,

brought about by the work of a dangerous memory, enables the struggle for justice to continue. Rigby's paper examines how Metz and Welch think this is possible.

As with other years, *Koinonia* asked doctoral candidates from five different disciplines to respond to Rigby's paper. The interdisciplinary diversity of this group of respondents proved an asset to the discussion, a diversity supplemented by the international diversity of the group, represented by Korea, the U.S., Australia, and Puerto Rico. Each person responded from the respective strengths of his or her discipline, opening up perspectives that would otherwise have been unavailable to us. The resulting interdisciplinary dialogue helped to focus the questions posed by Rigby and to examine both the assumptions on which the work of Metz and Welch are based and the implications of this work for the struggle for social justice today.

Representing the discipline of practical theology, Angella M. Pak considers how adequately Welch's "ethic of risk" enables one to move from epistemology to ethical practice. Pak suggests that Welch's perspective on the process of remembering oppression and the task of providing a safe environment for the rememberers is simplistic. She says Welch's ethic of risk is overly optimistic about the human ability to be mutually dependent and to agree on interests or positions that are more just. She also criticizes Welch's opinion that oppressed people remember reality more accurately than oppressors. Because the ability to generate a persuasive critique of present sociopolitical systems varies, the question of who is more effective in telling their memories becomes a critical issue. As an alternative, Pak suggests that an "ethic of faithfulness" may more adequately explain our relationship to God in sociopolitical spheres than an "ethic of risk."

Representing the theology department, William N. A. Greenway, Jr., focuses on the implications of the evolution of the title question of Rigby's essay from, "Is There Joy Before Morning?" to, "How Is There Joy Without Morning?" According to Greenway, Rigby implicitly rejects the promise of morning in order to

find joy in the midst of the oppressive night. That is, Rigby's development of the dynamic of dangerous memories, imagination, joy, and action is linked intricately with the rejection of traditional eschatological hope. As developed by Metz and Welch, dangerous memory is, at least, independent of that hope. The critical question is whether eschatological hope *necessarily* impedes present redemptive action. He suggests that the truth or falsehood of traditional eschatological hope must be determined on grounds other than whether it "robs us of responsibility," as though nothing else were at stake. The traditional eschatological hope can temper either the pain or the guilt we feel when we apprehend tragic situations. If this hope tempers our feelings of responsibility and guilt, it is illegitimate.

As a New Testament scholar, David M. Freedholm focuses on the relationship between memory, eschatology, and hope. He suggests that a reconsideration of the *function* of eschatological language may rescue it from the dustbin Metz places it in and he clarifies the links Rigby makes (via Metz) between memory, imagination, future possibility, and hope. Must we make a choice between eschatological hope and the hope derived from memory? Freedholm challenges the widespread idea that eschatology—especially apocalyptic eschatology—has no concern for ethics and that it focuses on a world other than our own. Rather, the concern of these writings was precisely with the place and behavior of the readers within this world. Thus, eschatology has and can provide a basis for praxis *particularly* in contexts of suffering and oppression. Drawing on the work of Paul Ricoeur, Freedholm says that by figuring another world, eschatological texts "redescribe" the reality of this world. They can be imaginary models in which we try out new values, new ideas, and new ways of being in the world.

As a historian, Beth Y. Langstaff argues that history should be a help, not a hindrance, as we seek to recover the past in the form of "dangerous" and often painful memory. Both the "facts" of history and the academic discipline itself can inform and chal-

lenge memory. "Dangerous memory" provokes the historian to take seriously the influence of such interpretation upon events and to explore again the critical relationship between faith/hope and human history. But what are the limits of memory? Is it enough for oppressors to "remember" how they have oppressed others? Does recognition of prejudice bring the resources to overcome it? Is knowledge sufficient for reform on both an individual and a social level? Langstaff questions the implied causal connection between memory and liberation. At the heart of her response is a criticism of the refusal to place justice in the hands of a transcendent God and in the eschaton since it implies that justice is a present and human creation. It conflates ethics and eschatology. The rejection of transcendence and eschatology seems to leave human history—the events of oppression and liberation—as the only possible context for joy.

From a missions and ecumenics perspective, Carlos F. Cardoza Orlandi asks how "dangerous memories" can be meaningful to a community. In the Latin American context, for instance—especially in Guatemala—"other memories" provide meanings for people—meanings that have taken many lives. Where is the joy in Guatemala? Cardoza criticizes the subjective individualism of Rigby's discussion of the issue. The different levels of social ethos in a given society must be named and investigated in order to perceive the conflict between what a community is and wants it is struggling to become. Furthermore, Rigby's understanding of the process of construing "dangerous memory" is too cognitive. The affective and conative aspects of the human being are equally important—and sometimes more important than the cognitive. On a deeper level, there is a need for a meaningful and ultimate principle that will empower the poor to engage in the ethical and political consequences of their own liberation. We need to seek "a meaningful and ultimate principle in the depth of our political agendas and subjective commonalities" that will move our poor people into liberation.

A new feature in this issue is Rigby's reply to the responses: "Hoping for Morning: Some Final Opening Thoughts." Although Rigby was able to address immediately some of the issues raised by the respondents at the forum, the publication of these papers makes possible a more considered response. It also appropriately carries the forum further as our readers engage in interdisciplinary dialogue and discussion on the role of memory and hope in humanity's struggle for a better world.

This issue of *Koinonia* also includes a selection of critical reviews of recent books in religion. These reviews represent the disciplines of biblical studies, theology, ethics, history, missions and ecumenics, and practical theology.

—LOREN L. JOHNS

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Is There Joy Before Morning? "Dangerous Memory" in the Work of Sharon Welch and Johann Baptist Metz

CYNTHIA L. RIGBY

INTRODUCTION: PARADOXICAL JOY

THE VIDEOTAPE BLARED NONSTOP ON OUR TELEVISION SETS AS riots broke out in Los Angeles. Those who beat Rodney King had actually been brought to trial, but the officers were acquitted, and we were numbed by disbelief. The oppressions of Communism finally came to an official end in the Soviet Union, but the people of the Soviet states still do not have enough food to eat. A New York City organization was respected for its ministry to street children until recently, when the press reported that the coordinator was an alleged sex offender. We send in our twelve dollars a month in an effort to share our wealth with two-thirds world families only to discover that seventy-five percent of our money never gets beyond the organization's business office. Battered women and children finally have some shelters and support systems to help them escape domestic violence, but many women cannot recognize their endangerment because they don't believe themselves to have viable economic or relational alternatives.

Some choose to respond to the oppressions reported in every evening's news by getting directly involved in the struggle. One can become a social worker, volunteer in a soup kitchen, circulate

a petition, or dig wells in a two-thirds world country. But burnout stalks those who become involved in such work. They become depressed by what they see. They are pushed by the oppressed themselves to give more than they had intended to give. They experience disappointment because the oppressive situation fails significantly to change.

What can we do when our best efforts to correct situations of injustice seem to have little or no effect? We might eventually choose to withdraw from the struggle. Naturally, we want to protect ourselves from disappointment and failure. Perhaps we are oppressed in some manner and feel we have limited resources for coping with the oppression of others. Or as oppressors we may feel threatened by a prodding suspicion that genuine acknowledgment of such oppression will inevitably challenge our comfortable lifestyles.

A Comparison of Hope-full-ness in Welch and Metz

According to Sharon Welch, it would be a mistake to assume that people who avoid suffering do not care about those surrounding them who are oppressed. The cynicism of most middle class persons—which makes them *seem* not to care—is actually only a defense mechanism. "Cynicism," writes Welch, "is a way ... of maintaining rage in the distorted form of giving up hope for change" (1990:168). More than protecting him- or herself from failure, the cynic wants to be protected against pain. It is too painful to consider the shared humanity of the oppressed, so those who are cynical "see victims only as victims" rather than as fellow human beings (1990:168). Because they have isolated themselves from those who are oppressed, cynics do not realize that hurt and pain are not the only things one may experience in relation to the oppressed.

Those who are overwhelmed by apparently indelible structures of injustice often cope with the related pain by believing that injustices will be eliminated in some future era. "What is presently the situation is admittedly bad," such a person might say,

"and we should do everything we can to correct it. But we must realize from the outset that justice will not and cannot be fully realized in the world as we know it. At some point in the eschaton, God's justice will prevail and oppression will cease. What keeps us going in the meantime is the hope and promise that someday justice will be a reality."

According to Johann Baptist Metz, the "common discussion of the tension between the already and the not yet is ultimately meaningless" and in fact runs counter to the belief that God's saving action is somehow evident in historical events.

> If our understanding of salvation is not to be stripped of its historical content and reduced to the level of a mere idea, it is obviously essential for the 'already' to be accepted and understood in the 'not yet,' that is, for the datum of salvation to be accepted in the hope. The already is, after all, a determining modality of the not yet, in so far as the 'not yet' claims to be more than and different from a 'not' or a 'nothing.' (1980:200)

For Metz, the Christian is called *not* to wait in hopeful anticipation of a better day, doing the best he or she can until justice becomes a reality. Rather, "the eschatological message" is that "the Christian is called upon in faith to bring about this freedom" (1980:201). As the Christian works at this task, he or she is to hold tightly to "the critical and liberating strength of Christian dogmatic memory": the memory that is "conscious of the deadly conflict between God's promises and a history that is dominated by [humanity's] alienated desires and interests" (1980:203–204).

Because he refuses to cope with present injustices by counting on a better future, Metz's understanding of "hope" is rather unusual. Hope, for Metz, holds only the pain of present struggle and can only be confused by traditional Christian assurances. Quoting Teilhard de Chardin, Metz comments that Christians should "go on asserting that we are awake and are waiting for the

master. But, if we were honest, we would have to admit that we expect nothing at all" (1980:179).

In refusing to locate the burden of achieving justice in the hands of God and in the realm of the eschaton, Metz simultaneously avoids the temptation to minimize human responsibility for injustice. But Welch implies that Metz has preserved the urgency of the matter of structural evil at an unnecessary cost. According to Metz, the present struggle against oppression is marked by pain precisely because human beings are hindered by their finitude. In our work for social justice, according to Metz, we must always be conscious of the "eschatological reservation," the "reminder that all of our good works are partial," realizing that the "eschatological promises of the scriptural tradition—freedom, peace, justice, reconciliation—cannot ... be identified with any social situation that has been achieved" (Welch 1990:107; cf. Metz 1969:153).

Citing the work of Juan Luis Segundo, Welch concurs that Metz is "too concerned with absolute purity of intent, actualization, and consequences" (1990:107). In other words, according to Welch, Metz is so attuned to the hazards of human frailty that his eschatological "hope" is actually anything but hope-full. Welch points out, quoting Segundo in her criticism of Metz, that "hope is paradoxically translated into a radically pessimistic view of the whole process of change ... precisely because any and every change prompted by [human beings] cannot help but lose out to world-dominating sin" (1990:107; cf. Segundo 1976:65). In his apparent "search for absolute victory" Metz completely misunderstands the nature of hope, according to Welch.

The tenor of Welch's discussion on the involvement of those who are willing to risk "dangerous memory" with those who are oppressed is altogether different. Welch, like Metz, admits human frailty and impure motives for seemingly virtuous human actions. She is certainly not waiting for the "master" to come and set issues of human justice in order. But the presence of human weakness and the absence of a problem-solving, transcendent God are not points of discouragement for Welch as they are for Metz. Rather, they are sources of life, freedom, and joy.

Herein lies the dilemma: how can Welch remain at the same time both realistic and hopeful in overwhelmingly sad and discouraging situations? Welch's discussion of memory, narrative, theology, resistance, and solidarity is infused throughout with a tone of joyfulness. How does one who rejects the promise of morning find joy in the midst of the oppressive night?

JOY: THE LIBERATING POWER OF REMEMBERING

On the Way to Remembering

Memory and remembering imply that something has been forgotten. Some things are forgotten because they are unimportant; these are not the ones that need to be remembered. The events that are forgotten precisely because they are crucially important are those that need to be remembered most, even if they are overwhelmingly painful. These critical life-events must eventually be remembered if liberation from past and present oppressions is to occur.

Many of us were carefully though subtly trained to forget certain life experiences. Dwelling upon situations of suffering is generally discouraged "in our advanced social systems," writes Metz, because "suffering is pictured as insignificant, ugly, and better kept out of sight" (1980:105). Those memories which "make demands on us" and on others are the ones we are encouraged most to repress by people who, according to the standards of our society, are more powerful than ourselves. These are the "dangerous memories" (Metz 1980:109). They are dangerous to those who are oppressed, in part, because they are a reminder of the pain and hurt one has suffered. They are dangerous to those who oppress because they threaten the power of the oppressor. When those who are oppressed have dangerous memories, they become enraged, and oppressors naturally wish to protect themselves from the discomforts of rage. Dangerous memories lead the oppressed to resist their oppression; such a dynamic disturbs the lives of both oppressed and oppressor. The threatened oppressor

will often double his or her efforts to oppress the already-oppressed one in a desperate effort to force the resister to give up those dangerous memories and to maintain the established relational patterns.[1]

Dangerous memories are especially painful for those who have been victimized. Because we desire to protect ourselves, to avoid the potentially destructive power of pain, we forget that events of suffering have even occurred. While repression of a particular memory might help us to survive temporarily in the midst of an oppressive situation, such repression is not ultimately healthy. Whether we realize it or not, memories of past (and present) oppression exist in the very fabric of our being. They affect who we are. According to Metz, forgotten incidences of oppression can serve to threaten our selfhood; they block the oppressed individual's realization of his or her own subjectivity.

Such a loss of memory results inevitably in a loss of freedom. Metz puts the matter succinctly, noting that "the enslavement of men [and women] begins when their memories of the past are taken away." "All forms of colonialization," Metz adds, "are based on this principle" (1980:110). When the oppressed of the two-thirds world recognize that their national identity has been stolen by first world colonists, they gain the freedom to reclaim this identity. When African-Americans remember the history of the slave trade, they become able to break free from that which binds them. When we as women cease to be satisfied that what we have is "so much better than it was before" and admit that we have been and still are victims of oppression, we will be free.

The freedom that comes with remembering is not a freedom from pain. On the contrary, the experience of liberation involves

[1] A person may well be a victim in one situation and an oppressor in another. A white North American woman, for example, might never receive a promotion due to the patriarchal structure of her workplace. At the same time, she might participate in the oppression of two-thirds world peoples by eating too many MacDonald's hamburgers, thus consuming indirectly more than her share of the world's grain resources.

embracing deep pain that has too long been ignored. According to Welch, those who spend all their time striving to "feel good" must also be striving to forget. Those who manifest this "symptom of amnesia" are forgetting more than just their experiences of oppression and suffering: they are forgetting part of what it means to be a human being. The nature of being truly human, the joy of participating in the fullness of life, is to feel, at times, the pain of suffering (1990:93f).

While the work of dangerous memory is not to offer freedom *from* pain, it can eventually enable one to work *through* pain, and in this way serve as an avenue of healing (Welch 1990:93). Such healing begins when the remembering individual allows memory to exert its initiating, often overwhelming power. Memories do not submit to guidelines for appropriate behavior; we do not know when and how they will affect us. To begin to work with memory is to admit with Saint Augustine that "although [memory] is part of my nature, I cannot understand all that I am" (1984:216). Those who want to know the value of remembering experiences of suffering must "discover how to learn from pain without trying either to conquer it or to become immune to it" (1990:93).

While it would be harmful to attempt to control one's memories, it is essential that rememberers learn how to interpret their memories in ways that are healing. Memory is dangerous to the rememberer in part because it can be destructive if it is not properly managed. The proper management of memory involves permitting memory to perform its liberating work without interference. Such interference includes trying to "fight off" memories for as long as possible. This strategy may work for a time, write Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, but it has severe consequences. "Headaches, nightmares, [and] exhaustion ... [are] not worth staving off what is inevitable" (1988:79). Proper management of memories includes allowing them to come to us when they choose. When someone feels a memory coming, she or he should seek a safe place in which to receive the memory and should rely

on friends and therapists for support and guidance (Bass and Davis 1988:81).

Another way for a remembering individual to maximize the liberating impact of memories is to learn to discern between reliving a memory and the abuse itself. While memories of childhood incest are undoubtedly extremely painful, the adult experiencing such a dangerous memory should recognize that the event itself is over; he or she has survived the event and now has only to survive the memory of that event. In short, "reliving a memory is part of ... healing, not an extension of the abuse" (Bass and Davis 1988:81).

Remembering an abusive event from the past evokes new and uncomfortable feelings of disappointment, sadness, and anger. Proper management of memory requires that remembering individuals learn when they should allow pain to make them angry and when they should "give up" the anger-causing pain. According to Bass and Davis, "anger [is] the backbone of healing," a "powerful and liberating force" that should not be avoided (1988:59). Welch argues similarly that "the challenge is to experience pain without denial—'when you hurt, hurt.'" At the same time, however, she recognizes that one cannot indefinitely add memories of pain upon memories of pain. It is possible, says Welch, to "hold on to ... suffering in a way that prevents growth." The flip side of the challenge, then, is to "know when to go on, learning from past pain without either trivializing it or clinging to it" (1990:94). One must let go of the old pain instead of "wearing it like a badge of honor" (Welch 1990:94; Marshall 1984:107).

Remembering as "Reconstruing"

Remembering a past event does not consist simply of recollecting the "facts" surrounding the place, time, and characters involved in a specific historical moment. Of course, oppressive events and situations are historical realities and historical facts can be recovered that leave no doubt that oppression has occurred. But

the hard facts of oppression are not the only important element in the reclaiming of memory. The emotions, reactions, and interpretations of the oppressed individual are also of critical importance. Perhaps what is most important is how the oppressed individual lays claim to the historical facts she or he remembers.

The importance of understanding oneself as a subject related to the historical facts of one's life is demonstrated in the story of a woman who knew "intellectually" for over a year that she was a victim of incest. She could recount all the historical details, but she did not experience healing. It was not until she realized that "This was about me!" that she was able to benefit from the healing power of memory (Bass and Davis 1988:79). This woman did not really "remember" her pain until long after all the facts had been gathered.

In her book, *From a Broken Web*, Catherine Keller explains that "our past experiences ... dwell in our present." This is what allows us to remember events in our lives rather than merely to recollect what has happened in the past. When we remember our past experiences, explains Keller, "we reach not outwardly back to an external child, but inwardly into a set of memories, mostly forgotten but nonetheless present" (1986:193). In light of the difference between recounting historical facts and remembering events of the past, Keller distinguishes between "reconstructing" and "reconstruing" a past event. While reconstructing the past aims at discovering what is "literally true *of* the past," reconstruing the past is concerned with "implications ... [that] may be true *to* the past" (1986:90).

Citing the work of Herbert Marcuse, Metz suggests that "remembering ... is a way of relieving oneself from the given facts, a way of mediation that can momentarily at least break through the omnipresent power of the given facts" (1980:193). When we choose to "forget" a painful event or situation that has occurred in our lives, Metz implies, we are virtually allowing the objective facts of the past situation to control us, rather than claiming these facts as working for us. It is the imagination which

allows us to grapple with the facts of history in a way that brings healing. It is when we combine imagination with these facts that we are truly able to remember. The "restoration of the capacity to remember," writes Metz, "goes hand in hand with the restoration of the knowing content of the imagination ... in this way the *recherche du temps perdu* becomes a vehicle of liberation" (Metz 1980:193; cf. Marcuse 1968:24ff). When the interplay of imagination is dismissed as unimportant by fact-finding missions, the recovery of memory is inevitably threatened.

Both Welch and Metz see a strong link between imagination and compassion. When the imagination dies, according to Welch, so does compassion (1990:60). And without compassion, how can one resist the evils of oppression? Imagination is necessary for compassion and compassion is necessary for community—the source of resistance and solidarity.

Because of its imaginative powers, "in Christianity, memory is, in its eschatological orientation, a repetitive memory forwards" (Metz 1980:188). Metz argues that the power of imagination inherent to memory is so connected to the invoking of compassionate feelings and action that the "memory of suffering" itself "brings a new moral imagination into political life, a new vision of others' suffering which should mature into a generous, uncalculating partisanship on behalf of the weak and unrepresented" (1980:117–118). One does not remember past and present incidences of suffering and oppression without simultaneously remembering that people should not be treated in such an unjust manner: *every* individual should be respected. Realizing what *should be* rather than what *is* pushes our memory into the future. Our rage and our hope empower us to "remember" this future possibility in our compassionate and resisting actions.

The Transforming Work of Narrative

The "rightful place" of memory, then, is clearly "as a means of liberation" (Metz 1980:193). But how do we tap into the liberating power of memory on the communal scale of which

Metz speaks? If the Christian memory of suffering truly fosters the type of compassion that finds its shape in the work of transformation, we must find some way of communicating this memory. While it would be counter to the liberating and imagining content of memory to package it neatly and hand it to someone else as a disturbing gift, there must be some means by which to "handle" memory without confining it. The question becomes, What concrete form can memory take while retaining its free nature?

In the community, memories are communicated through story. As an event is recollected, claimed, and reconstrued, it is often shared with others. The telling of such stories can trigger others to "remember" their own stories of victimization. These individuals can, in turn, share their stories. Through the sharing of stories, memory brings individuals into solidarity with one another, strengthening them to resist further oppression.

The point of narrative, then, is not that the same story be told and retold, but that one story may inspire the birth of others. Welch mentions in this regard Anne Cameron, who requests that her story about "the traditions of Native American women ... not be retold by those from other traditions, that it not be cited, sung, or danced, but that it serve as the impetus for all of us to recover, create, and tell our own stories" (as paraphrased by Welch 1990:139). The story of an individual member of the community, then, must not be treated as the "'one true story' of subjugation and revolt" (1990:139). Rather, stories of various individuals interweave with one another and the community is thereby strengthened.

It is in its form as narrative that the imaginative dimension of memory becomes especially evident. When someone is sharing her or his dangerous memories of victimization, those who have been similarly oppressed are probably not weighing the objective facts of the story. When told in the context of the supporting community, the story has the power to confirm itself. Metz agrees with Martin Buber that such a story "is itself an event" whose truth is not contingent on how many of its elements are historic-

ally documented facts. Rather, story as narrative "verifies or falsifies itself and does not simply leave this to discussion about the story which lies outside the narrative process" (1980:207–208). Metz quotes the story of a rabbi as it is retold by Martin Buber in 1973. It demonstrates at the same time both the internal verifiability of story and the transforming power of memory:

> My grandfather was paralyzed. Once he was asked to tell a story about his teacher and he told how the holy Baal Shem Tov used to jump and dance when he was praying. My grandfather stood up while he was telling the story and the story carried him away so much that he had to jump and dance to show how the master had done it. From that moment, he was healed. (Metz 1980:207–208; Buber 1963:71)

The power of the grandfather's imaginative memory took concrete shape in the form of the story. It literally healed the grandfather of his suffering by freeing his body from bondage. At the same time, the story-telling event convinced his rabbi grandson of the power of narrative. And he, in turn, is telling us his story—the story of witnessing his grandfather's healing. Similarly, though perhaps not as dramatically, the oppressed who tell their stories can be healed in the telling, inspiring others to add their stories.

While narrative does not depend on the exacting collection of historical data, it does preserve history. Without narrative, Metz reminds us, there would be no salvation history. "History is the experience of reality in conflict and contradiction," he explains, "whereas salvation is, theologically speaking, their reconciliation by the act of God in Jesus Christ" (1980:211). The healing, redeeming, and transforming power of narrative harbors the history of salvation even in the midst of oppressive world history. "The category of narrative memory prevents salvation and redemption from becoming paradoxically unhistorical" (Metz

1980:211). The work of narrative is to remind us that joy is genuinely present even though we are surrounded by predominantly joy-less historical facts.

JOY: THE CHALLENGE OF DANGEROUS MEMORY

Why Put Ourselves in Danger?

Memories of abuse are painful and therefore dangerous. Especially if the abuse is continuing in the present, it is often difficult for the one being abused to imagine putting him- or herself in a situation of danger. It may seem easier to find ways to cope with the oppressive situation than to risk making life worse.

While living in Mindanao, for example, the writer of this essay became aware that Filippinos working in the pineapple fields for Del Monte often try to convince themselves that their lives are not so bad. They make more money than the average Filippino and their children can go to the Del Monte school. It seems too dangerous for Filippino pineapple harvesters to remember that they have been pushed off their farmland by the corporation or that they are make only one third of the Filippino minimum wage. Remembering their oppression would mean giving up (supposed) satisfaction with life. It would mean having an uncomfortable anger toward those who are educating their children. Such dangerous memories might compel one to complain or even to attempt to form unions in an effort to achieve justice. Actions such as these would certainly lead to the loss of jobs, for Del Monte knows that plenty of Filippinos would gladly leave even worse situations to come and fill the vacancies. Even more dangerous, attempting to become involved in unions or claiming that one has human rights may get one accused of being a Communist, which is a life-threatening label in the Philippines.

Nevertheless, there are also reasons for those who are oppressed to risk having dangerous memories. For those who have been or are being victimized, the same memories that are dangerous can also be both healing and liberating. But why would an

oppressor risk a dangerous memory? If Del Monte were suddenly to "remember" that it is oppressing the Filippino worker and exploiting the country's natural resources, it would be compelled to pay a higher wage, to provide more adequate housing, to sell pineapples in the Philippines at a lower price, and to return stolen farmland. Such a dangerous memory could compel the company to move out of the Philippines altogether. Embracing such a dangerous memory would require Del Monte to swallow great financial loss, which is presumably not consistent with its goals as a multinational corporation.

According to Welch, however, oppressors might subject themselves to the work of dangerous memory in the desire to be liberated from their inhumane treatment of others. Welch even includes the oppressor as a potential participant in the community of the oppressed. Before the oppressor can join in solidarity with those who are oppressed, he or she must experience a "conversion," a "turning away from sin" (1990:55). The oppressor must "remember" the ways he or she exploits and oppresses others. "Change occurs when the response to this knowledge is not guilt but repentance, a deep commitment to make amends and to change patterns of behavior" (1990:174).

Such change can be reflected in the oppressor's willingness to participate in what Welch calls "communicative ethics": the oppressor explores the deep-seated prejudices into which he or she has been socialized (1990:156). "Middle-class Euro-American males," for example, should

> forthrightly analyze their experiences of sinfulness and transformation ... and ... elucidate the ways in which their religious traditions have furthered their unwitting participation in structures of race, class, and sex oppression and ... name ... how religious traditions have called them to conversion ... [and] participate in individual and structural change. (1990:156)

The one who has repented of his or her oppressive behavior is permitted to participate in the story-telling, though from a forever "chastened perspective" (1990:139).

Remembering does not function, for the oppressor, primarily to bring on feelings of shame. While participating in memories of oppression is certainly dangerous for the oppressor, it can actually bring great relief and joy. Welch explains that "admitting fault, examining social patterns that perpetuate racism and sexism, and beginning the careful work of making amends, of building egalitarian social structures ... is not a tortuous, life-denying ... process, but [one that] is life-giving" (1990:174). Participation "in the challenge of mending the rifts of injustice" leads to the discovery of "a larger self and a deeper joy" (1990:174). It is precisely in the hope of experiencing such freedom and joy that an oppressor chooses to become vulnerable to dangerous memory.

Does Welch offer compelling enough reasons for oppressed and oppressor to risk dangerous memory? The only "reward" for enduring the discomforts of memory is the deepened participation in human life which Welch implies is indicative of a joy-full experience. Like Metz, Welch offers no promises that struggles against oppression will result in more just social structures or even in fewer incidences of pain.

The risks demanded by dangerous memory might be taken more readily if one could hope for tangible benefits. History is filled with risk-takers who have anticipated something better. Compelled by "dangerous memories"—memories of economic and political oppression—immigrants who came through Ellis Island to the United States risked their lives to make the journey. The imagining dimension of their memories taught them that life should be better. They harbored great hope that they or their children would ultimately be rewarded for their risk-taking by a higher standard of living. Similarly, Muslim casualties of war and Christian martyrs gave their lives for a cause they thought was great: the "dangerous memory" of their faith. Yet, in taking the risks required by their memories, these individuals believed they would be rewarded in eternity for their faithfulness.

As we struggle with dangerous memories of oppression, is it appropriate to reassure ourselves that our work is somehow contributing to the ultimate victory of justice? May we look forward to that eschatological day when all will be made right? Without such a belief—without such a day—how can we continue to place ourselves in such great danger?

"Memoria Jesu Christi" as Dangerous Memory

Metz says emphatically that we should not stake our work against oppression and suffering on the promise of an eschatological moment when perfect justice shall reign. Dangerous memory for the Christian, as the *memoria Jesu Christi,* is "the memory of the coming of the kingdom of God in Jesus' love for the oppressed and rejected" (1980:203). The memory of Jesus Christ, according to Metz, is not focused on a world other than our own. This is why Metz insists that we cease putting energy into waiting for God's intervention and instead "anticipate the future as a future of those who are oppressed, without hope and doomed to fail" (1980:90).

Metz's outlook is quite discouraging. His commitment to the pursuit of dangerous memory is not strengthened by the conviction that remembering will ultimately affect a more pleasurable human existence. He strongly implies that his deep-rooted pessimism is, in part, a reaction to those traditional Christian theologies which have "deceptively dispensed Christians from the risks involved in the future." Metz argues that the *memoria Jesu Christi* is

> a dangerous and at the same time liberating memory that oppresses and questions the present because it reminds us not of some open future, but precisely *this* future and because it compels Christians constantly to change themselves so that they are able to take this future into account. (1980:90)

The memory of Jesus Christ collapses the future into the present, according to Metz, so that the eschaton becomes the here and now.

The memory of Jesus Christ convinces Christians that they are responsible for changing the oppressive structures of the world. More to the point, we as Christians are responsible for "changing ourselves" in relation to the oppressive situations that surround us. In Welch's understanding, the oppressor must choose to engage in the penetrating self-scrutiny indicative of communicative ethics if he or she desires to live in solidarity with the oppressed. Similarly, Metz recommends that Christians subject themselves to close self-examination. In what ways do we contribute to the oppressive structures of our society? In what ways are we working to change them? How are we faithful in demonstrating our love and solidarity with the oppressed? Speculation about what will happen in the future, Metz feels, only distracts from the critical discussion of these issues.

Reconstruing Theology: The Unparalleled Memory of the Holocaust

No memory is more dangerous than that of Auschwitz, and no remembering will precipitate in the Christian community greater self-scrutiny. In a lecture delivered in the mid-1980s entitled "Christians and Jews after Auschwitz," Metz argues that Christian theology must be different because of the Holocaust (1987:17–33). According to Fackenheim, the unique event of the Holocaust "ruptures" any understanding a Christian theologian may have of "the Good News" (1982:288). No theodicy exists that can adequately explain the utter silence of God in the face of the death of so many of God's chosen people. Christians who dangerously remember that six million Jews were killed will be compelled to heed what Jewish scholars have to say about how theology and biblical interpretation should be shaped. While such a "Christian 'Reformation'" will continue to affirm that Christians know the Jewish Tanak only through the New Testament, it must

at the same time work to do away with the "bimillennial mistake ... of Christian supersessionism." The New Testament must "in no sense" supersede the Old (Fackenheim 1990:82).

In light of the memory of the Holocaust, Metz's understanding of the dangerous memory of Jesus Christ seems all the more pressing. How may we, as Christians who stand in solidarity with our Jewish brothers and sisters, maintain our "triumphalistic" posture? How can we remain smugly certain that "saving history" will emerge victorious on "the messianic Day of the Lord" (1981:24)? "Our Christian faith in the salvation achieved for us by Christ," assesses Metz, has been "covertly reified to a kind of optimism about meaning, an optimism which is no longer really capable of perceiving radical disruptions and catastrophes within meaning" (1981:25). When we as Christians no longer recognize human suffering, we are no longer remembering. We have ceased to be "bearers of dangerous memory."

According to Richard Rubenstein, the memory of Auschwitz must be preserved in order for the Jewish people to maintain a posture of solidarity and resistance: in order that they will never be victims again (1975:68–72). Quoting from the works of Edward Alexander and H. G. Locke, Alfred Gottschalk argues that the Holocaust, that "incredible particularity of the Jewish experience," is at the same time an event of "universal meaning" for all oppressed peoples, a "key event" even for those who have not experienced it (1982:8). It is an "actuality of our history that ... cannot—yet must—be thought" (Tracy 1981:vii). It cannot be thought because it is too dangerous. It must be thought because the consequences of forgetting are more dangerous still.

Is there joy before morning for those who participate in the dangerous memory of the Holocaust? Any mention of morning in relation to Auschwitz must be considered blasphemous. The Holocaust is only night; there is no recovery from its devastating effects. Perhaps there could be joy (in the sense in which Welch speaks of it) in the solidarity of the community which mourns Auschwitz; there might be a kind of joy in the remembering

which empowers resistance to future oppression. But we have seen little testimony to such joy; Jewish scholars are more concerned that the Holocaust is already being forgotten. Joy, if it is possible, cannot come until Auschwitz is remembered.

JOY: THE COMMUNITY OF RESISTANCE

> In Velma's healing Bambara encapsulates the process that leads to the healing of community. She describes three aspects of persistent, joyful communal resistance to structural evil: an abiding love for other people, an acceptance of need for taking risks in political action, and an active commitment to 'ancient covenants' with life. (Welch 1990:95; cf. Bambara 1981)

The Love of Others

With his understanding of the *memoria Jesu Christi*, Metz has taken away that source of joy—the promise of a perfected future—that would have betrayed us and in fact is betraying us every day. Welch does not attempt to replace the hope which robs us of responsibility. Instead, she reveals to us the deep joy that is inherent to the struggle itself.

Welch notes that love, which knits the threads of the community into a resisting fabric, has been sorely neglected in the work of many liberation theologians. "The deep, resilient love for humanity and for the earth that motivates societal critique and self-critique is missing," laments Welch. She attributes this gap to "vestiges of transcendence" which still invade and have an impact upon theologies of immanence. According to Welch, traditional theologies of transcendence, which value heavily that which is infinite and powerful, have little patience for the finite and frail features of the earth and the frail humanity which exists on the earth.[2] Suffering and oppression only serve to highlight such

[2] Welch is working here with a caricature of transcendent theologies which bears resemblance to a number of its presumed subjects. Nonetheless,

unwanted weakness. Having genuine love for the finite would mean becoming vulnerable to that which is not all-powerful. It would mean admitting the goodness (rather than "sinfulness") of one's own finitude.

Welch identifies the latent fear of interdependence as one "vestige of transcendence" which hinders the development of liberationist thinking. Genuine love for others requires vulnerability to and reliance upon them. Interdependence ultimately involves celebrating not only the symbiotic relationship between different human beings, but also the dependence of the human community on the earth. Welch contrasts her understanding with that of Paul Tillich, who "sees our interdependence as a threat ... to self-affirmation ... and [therefore] something to be conquered" (1990:160). Welch encourages us not to be afraid to see our lives as "contingent ... belonging to the web of life, as a complex, challenging,

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she must be criticized for neglecting to acknowledge transcendent theologies which value finitude. Karl Barth, for example, argues that Jesus Christ is forever human and that his true humanity is, like all humanity, essentially finite. God in God's absolute freedom can choose even to be conditioned by the world, according to Barth. Jesus Christ's finite humanity is the vehicle for that salvific work which unconditioned omnipotence would fail to achieve: it enables Jesus Christ, as the head of all humanity, to serve as our mediator. Because Jesus Christ's humanity has been taken up into the Godhead, finitude is located in the divine (cf. *CD* IV/1, p. 130ff.; IV/2, p. 72; *GD* pp. 158–159).

Furthermore, it is certainly not the case that all theologians committed to the work of liberation find it necessary to reject transcendence. Latin American theologians Jon Sobrino and Leonardo Boff, for example, strongly imply in their christological work that resistance movements can be strengthened by belief in divine immanence only when God's immanence is understood to be inseparable from God's transcendence (cf. Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, pp. xxiii–xxiv; Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, pp. 258–261).

Are there theologies of transcendence which can avoid the peril of futuristic irresponsibility so powerfully highlighted by Metz? Might not dangerous memories serve to liberate those who rely on a transcendent God as well as those who have learned to rely on the power of their own finitude? These are questions which must wait for exploration in a future essay.

and wondrous gift." No longer should we "predicate ... meaning and value ... upon either necessity or upon ultimate foundations." Rather, the "dance of life, with all its contingency and ambiguity, can be good in itself" (1990:160). The symbol of the kingdom of God is replaced, in Welch's theology of risk, by that of the "beloved community" (1990:160).

A related reason why the love of others is often underemphasized by liberation theologians is because such love has often been associated with an unhealthy degree of self-denial. In order truly to love someone else, the legend goes, one's own (supposedly independent) self needs to be abdicated; one's needs become irrelevant and the needs of the other become all-consuming. The love that Christ demonstrated to humanity in his death on the cross is often held up as the model we should emulate in sacrificing for and loving one another. Rarely are we reminded of the times Jesus left the crowd, asked for water, or took an early morning walk to attend to his own needs.

Metz himself reveals a tendency toward this imbalance when he lists "the pain of self-denial"—along with "persistence, impatience, and patience"—as "characteristics demanded by the Christian memory of freedom as an imitation of Christ" (1980:94f). Although they are seemingly opposites, Metz notes that "impatience" and "patience" are both characteristics of the Christian life. What Metz apparently does not realize is that "self-denial" should be similarly juxtaposed with "self-affirmation."

The notion that love must be self-denying, says Welch, is a dangerous one, predicated on the misunderstanding that "the self is foundationally individualistic" (1990:162). Far from losing one's self in relation to other people, it is actually impossible for the self to know itself except in relation to others. When one becomes a part of a community of resistance, one becomes aware that "the dichotomy between love of self and love of others" is a "dangerous" and "destructive" one. To choose one should mean to choose the other; "to choose one or the other is destructive" (1990:163). Love for others, then, is self-fulfilling rather than self-denying.

In our work for social justice, if we refuse to recognize our interconnectedness with those who are oppressed, we will be able to see them only as victims. The helper/victim relationship is not founded on love, but rather on pity. It is only when we are able to recognize our selves as interdependent on other selves, accepting their contributions to our lives while offering ours to them, that we are able truly to love others.

To illustrate the importance of healthy communal relationships, Sharon Welch summarizes the plot of a novel written by Paule Marshall, entitled, *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People.* Welch sees in the character of Harriet a privileged person who "means well," who honestly desires to help those who are oppressed, but who eventually loses energy for her projects and ultimately commits suicide. Harriet is unable to continue her work or her life because she is unwilling to face the fact that the inherited money she uses to help the poor is money derived from the slave trade. In addition, Harriet is exhausted of her energy because she refuses to work in community. She goes out on her own salvific missions, "offering ... fruit juices and minor first aid" and "seeing the people of Bournehills as somehow different from herself" (Welch 1990:58; cf. Marshall 1984). Welch implies that there are many well-intentioned "helpers of the needy" who are destined to experience some version of Harriet's destiny if they do not allow themselves to be vulnerable to the healing powers of repentance and to the strengthening powers of community.

Love of others and participation in the community of the oppressed vaccinates one against indifference and recharges one with energy to continue to resist. This is why, explains Welch, there is

> repeated emphasis on practice by liberation theologians. Without working with others on projects geared toward social change, it is impossible to maintain the vision and energy necessary to sustain long-term work. Knowing refugees or the poor makes it possible to sustain rage,

> because one is aware of the value of the lives being so unnecessarily damaged or destroyed. (1990:168)

When we identify with the oppressed as fellow human beings rather than merely as victims, we are astounded at what they have to teach us about our shared humanity. In the Philippines, for example, the children are not the sad faces we see on television, anxiously waiting for a wealthy North American to send twelve dollars a month and so to "save" them. They enjoy life. They love to splash in the waves and dress up in disguises—more than many children of economically developed countries, who are too often confined at an early age by ideals of success and materialism.

A striking lesson about the strength of community is learned through a case in which a mission organization decided to "help" the oppressed people living on Smokey Mountain, the largest garbage dump in Manila, named for the smoke given off by its continuously burning garbage. The missionaries developed a program: they decided to move the families out, one by one, into subsidized housing communities. Surprisingly, the people refused to go. Why were they unwilling to better their life situation?

Clearly, the well-meaning missionaries saw the people of Smokey Mountain as victims, not as fellow human beings. By their own testimony, it never occurred to them that the residents of a garbage dump would feel proud and protective of their community. The happy end to this story is that the missionaries are learning what it means to love others more genuinely; they are trying to be open to joining in solidarity with the Smokey Mountain community. The plan has encouraged some who were planning to relocate to work instead for improvement in and with the community itself.

The missionaries in Smokey Mountain did not have to learn to love. They could have chosen to be indifferent to the needs of the residents. They could have been indignant that they were not permitted to be in the position of control. As a result of their wil-

lingness to work in partnership with the Smokey Mountain community, the missionaries are risking more than they had originally anticipated. The residents of the community already risked a great deal when they stood in solidarity and resistance against the initial project proposal.

The Need for Risk

The community of solidarity, based on mutual interdependence, love, and respect for one another's humanity, will inevitably encounter occasions demanding resistance to a particular political situation. The community will naturally react in a way that will preserve its identity, as the residents of Smokey Mountain reacted against the missionaries in order to preserve their community.

The theology of risk proposed by Welch values the finite. It sees the weaknesses of human beings and the limited potential of the earth as possibilities for joy. Finitude grants individuals a greater opportunity for interdependence and encourages the growth of love within the community. So also the ever-changing particularity of the human being guarantees the enjoyment of life.

For Metz, the unreliability of human motives sets all human action in question, but Welch's confidence in the power of human finitude leads her to a kind of optimism that is both celebrative and cautious. For example, Welch describes the worldwide "mass movements" for peace as empowered by a "love of life" that "enables the transcendence of social structures that destroy life" (1990:180). Elaborating on her belief that what is divine is located in the finite, Welch offers her interpretation of the nature of resistance movements:

> All of these movements are holy; all of them are flawed. Their gains are incomplete: aims for social justice are hindered by exploitive forces within the movements, and hindered by oppression from without .... Our efforts are partial, yet they are divine in their love and courage. They

> bear witness to the transcendent, healing power of love; they bear witness to the beauty and wonder of life. They are a dangerous memory. (1990:180)

It is critical to note that in the above quote, Welch locates holiness and divinity not in the *effects* of the efforts for liberation, but in the *efforts themselves*. Joy might be found in the "success" of a resistance movement, but it is first found in the movement's memory and solidarity. Even if there are no obvious political or societal changes as a result of an act of resistance, there is great joy and freeing power in the exercise of resistance itself.

This joy continues to empower as the historical event of the movement of resistance becomes itself a new "dangerous memory" of the community. "Memories of struggle against social systems are dangerous," writes Welch, because "they ... witness to protests against an order of things that claims to be natural, self-evident, or inevitable" (Welch 1985:39). Acts of resistance challenge oppressive power structures, then, even when they have supposedly "failed."

While the taking of risks is a requirement of freedom, this does not mean that one's resistance must be haphazard or uncalculated. Welch helpfully explains that a primary consideration in movements of resistance must be that the "self-respect" of the individual and community be maintained in order to serve as a foundation for further resistance (1990:76). A balance must be achieved between "accommodation necessary to survival" and "the creative defiance that lays the groundwork for change in the future" (1990:77). One should strive neither to be a martyr (one who has nothing left to give toward further efforts for freedom) nor a pragmatist (one who has avoided the life of risk; 1990:78).

Welch uses an excerpt taken from Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* to demonstrate the balanced stance that should be taken. In the story, a young African American girl named Cassie is upset because a white man forced her to get off the sidewalk in order for his daughter to pass. He also demanded

that she address this white daughter as "Miss." Although she did not want to do so, Cassie did as the man commanded to protect herself. Upon hearing her angry story, her mother praises Cassie both for being resistant to the demands of the white man and for carrying out the man's demands so that she would not be hurt. "Mama" instructs Cassie that she must continue to learn not whether or not to resist abuse, but "the necessity of choosing how" she will do so (1990:77).

> White people may demand our respect, but what we give them is not respect but fear. What we give to our own people is far more important because it's given freely. Now you may have to call Lillian Jean "Miss" because the white people say so, but you'll also call our own young ladies at church "Miss" because you really do respect them. (Welch 1990:77–78; cf. Taylor 1984:97)

Dangerous memory requires not only that we take risks, but that we do so creatively.

The life of risk, motivated by dangerous memory, is not a life that should readily be sacrificed for the sake of a principle. Rather, it should be lived to the fullest in the spirit of freedom. As involvement in the community through the loving of others is not characterized primarily by self-denial, but by self-fulfillment, so the point in taking political risks in response to dangerous memory is not to embrace martyrdom as such. Risks are taken not only to bring freedom in the future, but to maintain self-respect in the present. The taking of risks ensures that life can be lived joyfully, in the fullest possible way.

The Joy of Life

For Welch, the presence of justice and the presence of joy go hand-in-hand. "Where there is justice," she writes, "it is very good to be alive. Joy in the abundance of life enables and motivates resistance to the exploitation and destruction that vanquishes

the possibility of such joy" (1990:10). The one who is joyful is the one who participates and enjoys the "stuff" of life. According to Welch, joy "motivates resistance," and justice ensures joy. Without "joy in the abundance of life," there can be no justice.

"A deep and abiding joy in the wonder of life," notes Welch, is "the ethos central to feminist spirituality and ethics." Women's joy, in general, "is constituted by delight in diversity and change" (1990:169; Lacan 1985:137–148). Such joy embraces "finitude, interdependence, change, and particularity"; it "dances with life ... creatively responding to its intrinsic limits and challenges" (Welch 1990:122; Lacan 1985:159–160).

Such is the joy of those who participate in communities of resistance and solidarity, determined to be free in spite of a fragmented world and even because of it. "Joy emerges from a celebration of resistance and an 'emphasis ... on the political as the power to change the world'" (Welch 1990:144; Harlow 1987:35–36). Welch elaborates on the connection between joy and the political work of liberation, commenting on the depth of "the quality of life possible when the memory of suffering and the hope for justice are retained. The type of satisfaction" indicative of this life, says Welch,

> is not mere contentment, for it is a joy that carries as its correlate immense pain. Not everyone in the community ... can sustain this intensity, but the community serves as the matrix of its possibility, the foundation of a life of deep hope, anger, and love. (Welch 1990:64)

The joy made possible by dangerous memory, then, is located not in the success of the movements for resistance (although concrete, liberative advances certainly bring joy), but in the existence of the resisting community itself.

Further, it should be noted that the type of joy about which Welch speaks is not a joy that experiences primarily pleasure, but a joy that experiences fullness of life. Welch comments that a joy

which knew only pleasure would be inauthentic in a world so full of oppression. "Joy is tempered," writes Welch, "by the memory of how much has been lost to repression and by an awareness of how much remains unchanged" (1990:144).

There is joy before morning. It is a joy that is not unsophisticated. It is a joy that knows pain as part of life. As long as there is a community that remembers, there is joy.

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"Ethic of Risk" vs. "Ethic of Faithfulness"

ANGELLA M. PAK

BECAUSE CYNTHIA L. RIGBY'S ESSAY EMPHASIZES THE HEALING work involved in remembering events of oppression, it is of special interest to practical theology. She identifies a crucial issue faced by Christians today: the potentially immobilizing impact of the "eschatological reservation" on social-political practices by Christians and the resulting lack of the relevance of hope in the eschatological future for justice-making in the present.

Rigby is correct in suggesting that the inability of present practices to effect social-political justice results from cynicism, a dichotomy between the world and the world to come (Rigby 1993:2). This eschatological reservation, in turn, can have an immobilizing effect on present social-political practices for justice. It can become a vicious circle in which the relevance of hope in the eschatological future for present justice gets lost. Thus, Rigby asks the question, "Is there joy before morning?" or, "How does one who rejects the promise of morning find joy in the midst of the oppressive night?" (Rigby 1993:1, 5).

Rigby shifts the focus from a dialectic between the future hope and the present to the dialectic between memory and the present. She does not insist on eschatological hope in the future, nor does she disregard it. Rather, building on the work of Sharon Welch and Johann Baptist Metz, she looks to memories from the

past as a motivating force for present efforts for justice. These memories are specifically called "dangerous memories." Rigby further asserts that joy is generated as we remember the dangerous memories, participate in the demands of the dangerous memories, and join in the community of resistance. In what follows, I will present anthropological and theological critiques of how adequately Welch's "feminist ethic of risk" enables one to move from epistemology (knowledge) to ethical practice.

First, Welch portrays a simplistic perspective on the process of remembering oppression and the task of providing a safe environment for the rememberers. Working with memories of oppression is a complex and long-term process. Memories of oppression do not come automatically when recalled; nor is the recalling process instantaneous. It is sometimes healthier for forgotten memories to remain forgotten. Even when one is ready to remember the memories of abuse or oppression, it takes a long time for one's memories to work their way through the healing process. Furthermore, knowing that remembering oppression brings freedom and joy may not speed up the healing process. In fact, emphasizing such a fact can result in further regression or more frustration in rememberers.

Healing memories of oppression is not only a long-term process, it also involves a strong intensity of emotions, such as despair, anger, and hostility. This underscores the importance of the role of pastoral care to provide a safe place for people to share their memories of oppression (cf. Rigby 1993:7). If a safe environment is not adequate for the long-term and intense nature of healing process, more harm than healing will result. In other words, the rememberer's own readiness and the presence of a safe environment are prerequisites for the healing process. More importantly, an adequate understanding of the complex and long-term nature of the healing process is imperative.

Second, Welch's ethic of risk holds an optimistic perspective on the human ability to be mutually dependent and to agree on "interests or positions [that] are more just" (Welch 1990:126).

Welch asserts that in order to determine which interests or positions are more just, different communities need to come together to listen to each other and to critique one another (Welch 1990:126). She calls this a communicative ethic. It is possible by holding together the love of self and love of others. Love of self and of the other is grounded in "admitting the goodness (rather than 'sinfulness') of one's own finitude." This recognition of finitude brings mutual dependence and mutual recognition of each other as "other," rather than as nonbeing (Rigby 1993:19–20). According to Welch, a mutual dependence born of a communicative ethic brings solidarity which insures participants of a "mutually transformative relationship" (Welch 1990:135).

In appealing solely to the goodness of human finitude, Welch is too optimistic about the correlation between admitting the goodness of human finitude and mutual dependence. Finitude can result not only in mutual dependence, but also in the manipulative control of one another. Neither human sinfulness before God nor the goodness of human finitude should be forgotten. Consequently, Welch's ethic of risk does not spell out how the collective sharing of stories brings about a more just—if not the most just—community.

Third, Welch's ethic of risk has an idealistic perspective on the epistemic privilege of the oppressed. Welch asserts the epistemological privilege of the oppressed (Welch 1985:27; 1990:128). She compares this to Foucault's concept of the "insurrection of subjugated knowledge" (Welch 1990:149) and thus upholds the priority of the knowledge of the oppressed over the knowledge of the oppressor. According to Welch, the oppressed remember reality more accurately.

Not all the stories of the oppressed are dangerous memories, however. Memories of oppression must be "used" intentionally to endanger the assumptions underlying the present socio-political system. Welch asserts that "memories of oppression and defeat become dangerous when they are used as the foundation for a critique of existing institutions and ideologies that blur the recogni-

tion and denunciation of injustice" (Welch 1990:155). Memories are not merely recalled but used to make evident the injustices of sociopolitical systems. Memories are initially *remembered* and then intentionally *used* to reveal oppression at work.

Whether memories of oppression become dangerous memories depends on their ability to generate a critique of present sociopolitical systems. Thus, the question of who is more effective in telling their memories becomes a critical issue. It is questionable whether the epistemic privilege of the oppressed can be accepted as reality by different groups of people. A more important issue is the relative difference in the abilities of oppressed people to communicate dangerous memories and to evoke powerful images in others. Eloquent speakers and writers have the advantage of being able to use memories of oppression as dangerous memories. It is the adults, not the children; the mentally healthy, not the mentally ill or retarded; the active, not the passive; the articulate, not the inarticulate; and the educated, not the uneducated that have a privileged status in naming the epistemology of the world. This, then, speaks of potentially oppressive dynamics among the oppressed. Thus, the epistemic privilege of the oppressed does not guarantee the liberation of the oppressed, since some of the oppressed themselves participate unwittingly in oppression.

Fourth, the practical knowledge elucidated in the ethic of risk is too abstract. Rigby points out the balance that needs to be maintained in Welch's feminist ethic of risk between the "accommodation necessary to survival" and "the creative defiance that lays the ground work for change in the future" (Rigby 1993:25; cf. Welch 1990:77). In other words, Welch does not recommend risk-taking every time one is faced with oppression. Rather, she suggests that people use practical wisdom in discerning the situation. The criterion to be used is self-respect. Rigby states that "the 'self-respect' of the individual and community must be maintained in order to serve as a foundation for further resistance" (Rigby 1993:25, quoting Welch 1990:76–81).

Appealing to practical wisdom in keeping the balance is a strength of Welch's feminist ethic of risk. Practical wisdom falls

short, however, when it sets self-respect as a criterion without providing clues as to what it means to maintain self-respect in different concrete situations. Welch needs to make her "ethic of risk" more specific. Ironically, although Welch's feminist ethic of risk finds truth in practice, the theory articulated is either too abstract or too optimistic for the desired practice to be actualized.

Finally, a question about the theological basis for the ethic of risk needs to be raised. Rigby notes that a central theme of Welch's feminist ethic of risk is the priority of *efforts* over *effects* (Rigby 1993:25). Welch is correct to redefine responsible action in social-political efforts. Defining responsible action in terms of outcomes places too much emphasis on one's ability to control consequences. For this reason, Welch redefines responsible action as that which is based on risk, not on control. Responsible action does not "guarantee decisive changes in our lifetime or in the near future" (Welch 1987:26). Rather, it creates "a matrix in which further actions are possible, the creation of the conditions of possibility for desired changes" (Welch 1987:27). Welch's remedial approach to social problems is noteworthy for its practical nature. However, further assessment is required to determine if a theology of risk can adequately explain the relationship of our actions to God's redemptive activity in the world.

In addition, we must look at the word *risk* itself. The word implies the "possibility of loss or injury" (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1991). Faithfulness may result in injury, but not loss. Efforts at liberation may result in the sort of emotional or physical injury Christians may count as gain. When we trust God's faithfulness toward us and the world, we are being faithful as God's people in Christ. When we find meaning in our faithfulness despite how things may seem, we find true joy in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

I would thus suggest that an "ethic of faithfulness" more adequately explains our relationship to God in sociopolitical spheres than does an "ethic of risk." I envision a more ready

"yes" to the question, "Is there joy before morning?" when an "ethic of faithfulness" is encouraged more than an "ethic of risk."

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The Integrity of Hope, Action, and Dangerous Memory

WILLIAM N. A. GREENWAY, JR.

THIS RESPONSE FOCUSES ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE EVOLUtion of the title question of Rigby's essay from, "Is There Joy Before Morning?" to, "How Is There Joy Without Morning?" At the end of the paper, Rigby can answer, "Yes, there is joy before morning," because she has delineated an understanding of joy which stands independent of any thought of "morning" at all. It is unfortunate that Rigby fails to note this evolution explicitly, for attending to it yields critical insights.

I admit some trepidation at responding to what are largely liberationist and feminist concerns. I recognize that my thinking reflects my story as a white male middle-class American Protestant. Although I can broaden my understanding by striving to understand and sympathetically imagine other's stories, I can never escape my own life context or deny its influence on my thinking. This is especially sobering on this occasion, since it is precisely when critiquing other's stories that one is most prone unwittingly to manifest distasteful prejudices.

Rigby's presupposition that historical, social, and economic contexts constitute the formative birthing ground for our ideas tends to make us in the Western intellectual tradition squirm. The depth of this discomfort is betrayed by the vitriol which often accompanies what might otherwise be insightful responses to dis-

cussions working with this presupposition. Given these considerations, I will make a qualification which Rigby should have made explicit and which applies equally to Metz and Welch: Since this response is limited in that it is written from and to an educated Western middle-class perspective, it remains a tentative contribution to the conversation and stands ready to engage affirmations and rebukes from alternative perspectives.

SHOULD ONE THINK OF MORNING?

Rigby's paper begins with a sympathetic description of the plight of those who are not oppressed. We are surrounded by suffering and injustice. Our best efforts are too often futile. We cannot give a dollar to everyone who approaches us, so we turn away, thinking, "It would have gone for drink, anyway." Ethiopia? Somalia? Overwhelming. We take secret comfort in the knowledge that fighting factions would obstruct the aid. Welch interprets our cynicism generously: it is "a way ... of maintaining rage in the distorted form of giving up hope for change" (Welch 1990:168; cf. also Rigby 1993:2). Rigby suggests a more sinister suspicion later: righting injustice and ending poverty would cost us too dearly.

With the first interpretation, our cynicism protects us from pain. With the second, our cynicism protects our interests. In either case, the traditional conception of the eschaton comforts Christians. For those whose cynicism protects against pain, a traditional eschatological hope tempers pain. For those whose cynicism protects interests, a traditional eschatological hope tempers guilt. With either interpretation, the hope of an eschaton undergirds cynicism; it helps us tolerate our own passivity and injustice and hinders any impetus to engage in the struggle because "it will all be made right in the eschaton." To shake people out of their lethargic cynicism, we must jettison the traditional conception of the eschaton.

Metz deepens the argument by asserting that the future must be a modality of the present in order to be more than a "nothing"

or a "not" (Metz 1980:200; cf. also Rigby 1993:3). That is, any radical inbreaking or discontinuity which brings a new age from without would be at best unintelligible, or worse, something alien, a negation of the meaningfulness of our history. We should rather conceive the eschaton as an ideal one struggles to achieve in the present. This is the *memoria Jesu Christi*. The kingdom came in Jesus' love for the oppressed and rejected and comes ever anew in our love for the oppressed and rejected—and in no other way. We act out of present concerns. We assume responsibility for future pains and joys, but we never abandon the present. We never flee to an imagined utopia, whether human or divine.

Dreams of morning allow a wonderful alienation from the present. Like an opiate, they send us on comforting flights to the unreal. Like an opiate, they rob us of the present and the real. Like an opiate, they must be cast aside. Therefore, we should not ask, "Is there joy before morning?" but, "Is there joy without morning?" Rigby sums this up without qualification,

> With his understanding of the *memoria Jesu Christi*, Metz has taken away that source of joy—the promise of a perfected future—that would have betrayed us and in fact is betraying us every day. Welch does not attempt to replace the hope which robs us of responsibility. Instead, she reveals to us the deep joy that is inherent to the struggle itself. (Rigby 1993:19)

Marx's famous critique has become more virulent. Many consider Marx functionally correct, but aver that he has critiqued only an abusive appropriation of Christianity. The strain of the critique we are encountering here is stronger. The very idea of a God through whom justice and love will ultimately prevail is judged to be intrinsically oppressive. We *should not* encourage hope in such a God. Three related reasons have been offered. First, by tempering our pain or guilt, eschatological hope impedes impetus to action. Second, if history is ultimately determined from without, if the

future is *not* a modality of the present, then the present is emptied of its significance. As a consequence, third, we will be tempted to flee to the eternal and leave the ugly, ultimately insignificant present to fend for itself. In each case, the impetus for present liberative action is impeded. Hence we should not encourage hope in morning.

This argument is usually joined to others which insist that the very concept of a transcendent God is inherently oppressive. Rigby does not develop that position, though one hears echoes of it when she discusses Welch's attribution of a lack of concern for liberation to "vestiges of transcendence." Although Rigby criticizes Welch for "caricaturing" theologies of transcendence, she does not adequately develop the profound significance of this issue for her essay.

JOY AND POWER THROUGH DANGEROUS MEMORY

Thus, Rigby's central question becomes, "How does one who rejects the promise of morning find joy in the midst of the oppressive night?" (1993:5). The answer, in short, is, "through dangerous memories."

Dangerous memories are forgotten or suppressed memories which, if "re-membered," would be critical to our self-understanding and action. Dangerous memories operate on both a psychological and a social level. In addition, the same memories are dangerous in different ways, depending on whether one is the oppressor or the oppressed. Psychologically, they are dangerous to the oppressor because they instill guilt; they are dangerous to the oppressed because they can be a source of great pain. Societally, they are dangerous to the oppressor because they stir the resistance of the oppressed; they are dangerous to the oppressed because they call them to actions susceptible to ridicule, rejection, and even violence.

Rigby does not clearly distinguish individual memories (e.g., memories of child abuse) from collective or historical memories (e.g., memories of colonization). However, this ambiguity

reminds us that our self-identity is not simply a function of our personal life experiences, but also of our social location. One must attend self-consciously to one's gender, race, nationality, and class. Just as it is important for individuals to re-construe their personal memories—to recognize their impact and to struggle with them—so Native Americans, women, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latin Americans (and in a different way even European Americans) need to remember the impact of historical caricatures and stereotypes which constitute society's "memory" of them.

As Rigby explains, dangerous memories, when re-membered and re-construed, can be the source of significant empowerment and healing. As the re-membering of dangerous memories empowers the struggle of the oppressed or heals past pains, they become the source of joy. Not coincidentally, this usually occurs precisely at those points most threatening to the oppressor. However, these memories can also bring healing for the oppressor (as Welch's concept of "communicative ethics" helpfully suggests, Welch 1990:156; cf. also Rigby 1993:14). For precisely that which is the source of the oppressor's guilt or structural oppression is threatened. All the oppressors are in danger of losing is that which alienates them from their neighbor. This understanding is critical in preventing the oppressor's compassion from becoming pity; for, according to this understanding, the oppressor's acts of compassion liberate the oppressed from oppression *and* the oppressor from being oppressive. Likewise, acts of resistance on the part of the oppressed liberate both the oppressed themselves from oppression and their oppressors from being oppressive.

Given the inescapable structural dynamics which imprison most oppressors, the possibility of oppressors being freed from their structural or institutional status as oppressors is exactly as slight as the possibility of liberating all the oppressed. While I, as a white male, may not be racist or sexist or an exploiter of the two-thirds world at an individual level, I am a racist, a sexist, and

an exploiter of the two-thirds world insofar as I benefit from my inescapable participation in an oppressive social order. At a structural level, I am bound in this sinful state. No matter how well I heal my individual actions and attitudes, the only way to alleviate my structural complicity in oppression is to change the social, economic, and cultural structures which bind me. Furthermore, since oppressors can never escape their own contextual boundedness, they must never imagine that they know what it is to be oppressed or what the oppressed need. For these reasons, they must work from a "forever 'chastened perspective'" (Welch 1990:139; cf. also Rigby 1993:15).

In theological terms, we structurally bound oppressors must recognize our dependence on the grace of the oppressed and on the grace of God. It is a *hubris*, a powerful protective drive to see ourselves as innocent, which impels many of us to deny this structural complicity in oppression. One can trace the vehement protestations of innocence on the part of many European Americans to this *hubris*. This may also be the root of the widespread stereotyping and dismissal of theologies of liberation. Our North American propensity to construe issues individualistically, our curious blindness to the structural dimensions of evil, aids us in our denial of guilt.

Recognizing our complicity in oppression should keep those of us sympathetic to the struggle from trying to alleviate our guilt by participating vicariously in the story of the oppressed. We must each "tell our own stories" (Welch 1990:139; cf. also Rigby 1993:11). Men may be profeminist, but they may not be feminists; white women may be prowomanist, but may not be womanists; Western intellectuals may be pro-two-thirds world liberationists, but may not be two-thirds world liberationists. Each person—even a white Western male—has a distinctive and valuable story to tell. However, considering who has done the telling for the past few millennia, it is proper for those with the dominant voice historically to begin by listening.

Imagination plays a crucial role in this context. The imagination serves two purposes. First, the imagination serves a critical

function vis-à-vis compassion. Imagination brings "a new vision of others' suffering which should mature into a generous, uncalculating partisanship on behalf of the weak and unrepresented" (Metz 1980:117–118; cf. also Rigby 1993:10). Second, since we can imagine creative alternatives to injustice, we can imagine what should be rather than what is, and in this way we push our memory into the future (1993:10).

Thus, as I re-member memories and so re-member who I am, I am empowered if oppressed and repentant if an oppressor. Imaginative play with possibilities for just and loving relationships guides present action. The oppressed, empowered by remembering, act to escape the burdens of oppression. Those denying painful hidden memories feel their quiet but powerful pull. Oppressors may act to still a nagging guilt, but their action may also be fed by their ability to imagine sympathetically the plight of the oppressed and by recognition of the need to liberate themselves structurally from being oppressors. Finally, those engaged in the struggle testify to oppressor and oppressed alike that there is a "deep joy that is inherent to the struggle itself" (1993:19). To engage dangerous memories is to engage in the struggle. As dangerous memories heal, empower, and restore, the joy intrinsic to the struggle is received. The answer, therefore, is, "Yes, there is joy before morning," because there is joy without morning.

It is critical to note, however, that the dynamic just encapsulated in the dynamic of dangerous memories, imagination, joy, and action, has its own integrity. That is, it can be developed without taking any position on "morning" at all. This means that these powerful liberating insights can be appropriated both by those who reject and by those who accept the traditional Christian idea of the eschaton.

In Rigby's paper, however, the development of the dynamic of dangerous memories, imagination, joy, and action is linked intricately with the rejection of traditional eschatological hope. This link is established via an uncritical substitution of joy for hope. Says Rigby, "Welch does not attempt to replace that *hope*

which robs us from responsibility. Instead, she reveals to us the deep *joy* that is inherent to the very struggle itself" (Rigby 1993:15; emphasis mine). It is this quiet substitution of joy for hope which entails reformulating the title question, "Is there joy before morning?" into, "Is there joy when no morning may be anticipated?" Is this substitution and reformulation legitimate?

HOPE AND LIBERATIVE ACTION

The critical question is whether eschatological hope *necessarily* impedes present redemptive action. Undeniably, Christianity often functioned as the "opiate of the people." Christianity has been (and continues to be) appropriated to justify institutions such as colonialism, slavery, and the oppression of women. But traditional Christianity has also functioned to empower disempowered people (e.g., African spirituals in the ante-bellum South). Rigby even mentions two Latin American theologians who think that the conception of a transcendent God *supports* the struggle for liberation.

Thinkers who delineate the complicity of Christianity in perpetuating oppression stand on solid historical ground. However, those who assert that the traditional Christian understandings of God and of the eschaton are *intrinsically* oppressive stand on more tenuous footing. That certain beliefs have historically functioned to support oppression is verifiable and incontestable. But to claim that certain understandings are inherently oppressive (i.e., oppressive regardless of their context) absolutizes a particular conceptual scheme.

Consider, for example, the stress on context in the following passage from Beverly Harrison:

> 'Otherworldliness' in religion has two very different sources in our social world of knowledge. One sort of otherworldly religion appears among the poor and downtrodden, reflecting a double dynamic in their experience: It reflects a hopelessness about this world that is engendered by living daily with the evil of oppression, but it also fuels

> and encourages an ongoing struggle against the present order by conjuring a better time and a better place, beyond the oppressive here and now. However, an entirely different form of otherworldliness appears amongst those of us who have never been marginated, who have lived well above the daily struggle to survive, when our privileges are threatened. This form of otherworldliness is merely escapist, and its political consequences are entirely reactionary. Its result is to encourage denial of responsibility for the limited power that we do have, and it always results in reinforcing the status quo. (1985:6–7)

Harrison's quote describes a real strength derived from hope in "morning" by those in the midst of oppression. People watching their children go hungry are not greatly impeded in their quest for liberation by otherworldly hope. The needs of the present suffice to prevent escapism. But even if hope in "morning" does not necessarily impede liberative action, does it not remain a dangerous idea (particularly in the Western context)? Would it not be better to derive joy solely from the struggle itself without regard to hope?

Two things are at stake in asking this question: first, the subjective hopes of concrete individuals; second, objective hopes regarding the fate of concrete individuals.

First, it is useful to make a rough distinction between affliction and suffering (one inspired by Simone Weil). Suffering is pain or oppression where there is the possibility of struggle and room for hope. Affliction is pain or oppression whose random nature prevents struggle or whose severity or context means there is no earthly hope of relief. Someone who is afflicted cannot struggle. What is needed is comfort. The traditional hope in the eschaton provides this comfort and does not necessarily impede the struggle for liberation. Although "affliction" and "suffering" signify regions on a continuum which shade into each other, they are sufficiently distinct to make the point.

The second thing at stake is objective hope regarding the fate of concrete individuals. In *Sexism and God-Talk*, Rosemary Radford Ruether addresses this issue when discussing eschatology and the earliest historical forms of the Hebrew religion. Speaking specifically of those dying in the struggle for liberation, Ruether says, "At best, meaning can be given to their deaths because they died in hope for the revolution and those around them feel that their sufferings contributed to the coming of the better future" (1993:243).

However, this answer was deemed insufficient by the Hebrews. Consequently, they developed a doctrine of the historical resurrection of the dead. We moderns, however, cannot share the same hope. Says Ruether,

> The Hebraic idea of the resurrection of the dead was intended to bridge this gap between present unjust sufferings and the future era of vindication. But modern revolutionary hope cannot promise resurrection of the dead; it can promise only that someday our descendants will see a better day. For the peasant whose child has died of malnutrition, the promise of the coming revolution must seem more remote and 'eschatological' than the promise of Heaven into which the innocent soul can enter immediately. (1993:243)

Yes indeed it must! This concern continues to haunt Ruether. Consequently, her final position in her chapter on "Eschatology and Feminism" is equivocal. She reiterates her question,

> What of the sad insufficiencies of human finitude and the consequences of social evils that take the lives of little children and cut off adults in the prime of life before they can make their contribution? What of the vast toiling masses of human beings who have had so little chance to fulfill themselves? What of the whole tragic drama of human history,

> where so few have been able to snatch moments of happiness and fulfillment in the midst of toil and misery?" (1983:256–257).

Her first (and perhaps ultimate) answer to these despairing queries is agnosticism. She goes on, however, to offer a classic process understanding which goes beyond agnosticism and makes short shrift of the compelling questions just raised:

> We can do nothing about the 'immortal' dimension of our lives. It is not our calling to be concerned about the eternal meaning of our lives, and religion should not make this the focus of its message. Our responsibility is to use our temporal life span to create a just and good community for our generation and for our children. It is in the hands of Holy Wisdom to forge out of our finite struggle truth and being for everlasting life. (1983:258)

The "joy inherent to the struggle" cannot fully address such situations of tragedy or evil. This struggle and its joy does not fully address the poignancy of a patient in the final stages of AIDS or of parents in a refugee camp watching helplessly while their children starve or of the revolutionary being executed for mounting resistance. It also fails to address fully our memory of these. In other words, *subjectively* considered, the concrete situation of people who find themselves afflicted is not fully addressed; and *objectively* considered, our anguish as we remember people crushed by oppression is not fully addressed.

It will not do to say that the "eternal meaning of our lives" is not our concern and to couple this with the invitation to invest ourselves in some abstract "collective personhood" or in "the struggle for liberation." The above expressions of concrete evil must be remembered and named as evil. Period. In these contexts of affliction, the triad of dangerous memory, joy, and action can only remain silent.

This is not, however, a critique of this triad; it was not meant for these contexts in the first place. The question we have been addressing here is, What is at stake in the rejection of eschatological hope? In these contexts, traditional eschatologies are the strongest source of hope and comfort.

Do we conclude, therefore, that we should have hope in morning? Is the traditional hope then established as correct? No. The traditional hope may be false. The point, however, is that the truth or falsehood of this hope must be determined on other grounds. It cannot be dismissed from the start as a "hope which robs us of responsibility" as though nothing else were at stake.

This analysis also leads us to see what theoretical consequences follow from rejecting "morning." When traditional conceptions of God and eschatological hope are lost, all those evils which engendered the classic theodicy problem become the source of a "cosmodicy" problem. At best, the cosmos appears indifferent. Human thoughts of justice and meaningfulness are a surd. When the cosmos is judged by human standards, it is at best absurd and at worst evil.

We must not dance around the tragic implications of this reality for the concrete individual. To abstract from the tragic realities experienced by the overwhelming majority of humans and to focus instead on the liberative "struggle" of humanity writ large or on some panentheistic "collective personhood" is little less a flight from the concrete present than a crass otherworldliness. It is little less an abstraction from and negation of concrete people—people who are themselves the reality from which historical processes, struggles, and hopes are an abstraction—than is the negation implied by the conception of an utterly discontinuous, inbreaking eschaton.

Reinhold Niebuhr offered striking insights into these issues in his 1934 work, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*. He anticipates my criticism of Welch and Ruether (as well as the process view in general) when he addresses a "sober type of rationalism" which "comprehend[s] the unity of the world within the living

flux of history" (1963:15). The problem, as I have tried to argue, is that as "far as it succeeds in doing this it results in the optimistic identification of the Absolute with the totality of things, a conclusion at variance with tragic realities of existence" (1963:15). Of course, neither Welch nor Ruether are idealistic monists. But even though both would be horrified to be called rationalists, their thought exhibits these same problematic tendencies.

Niebuhr has an equally strong critique of those who flee to a mystical belief in a transcendent Absolute. Anticipating Metz, he notes that insofar as the mystical Absolute "transcends every form and category of concrete existence," it empties concrete existence of meaning (1963:14). We must guard against the temptation to "escape" to either a "rational or eternal absolute" which "ceases to be the ground of the natural, but is only the ultimate abyss of the natural where all distinctions vanish and all dynamic processes cease" (1963:13). Christianity can do this insofar as the "myth of creation offers ... the firm foundation for a world-view which sees the Transcendent involved in, but not identified with, the process of history" (1963:13). The kingdom of God thus functions as an orienting ideal. "It is in fact always coming but never here" (1963:36).

Niebuhr describes succinctly the concerns which must be balanced:

> The ethical fruitfulness of various types of religion is determined by the quality of their tension between the historical and the transcendent. This quality is measured by two considerations: The degree to which the transcendent truly transcends every value and achievement of history, so that no relative value of historical achievement may become the basis of moral complacency; and the degree to which the transcendent remains in organic contact with the historical, so that no degree of tension may rob the historical of its significance. (1963:5)

The trick, concludes Niebuhr, is to avoid "the Scylla of a too optimistic pantheism or the Charybdis of a too pessimistic and otherworldly dualism" (1963:61).

CONCLUSION

"Dangerous memories" refers to those self-constituting events one can never avoid without a loss of authenticity. Rigby has clearly and helpfully shown us a way to understand how dangerous memories—when joined with the imagination—can heal, liberate, empower, and authenticate the lives of oppressor and oppressed alike.

Insofar as memory serves these functions, it is a source of joy amid hardship and struggle. Following Welch in particular, Rigby has successfully described a form of joy intrinsic to memory which is achieved when memory realizes its potential in these ways. This is joy pure and immediate. It is not linked to future possibilities, but is purely a function of the immediately present liberative power of memory. It is for this reason that one can affirm that there is indeed joy before morning—or even, in this case, joy without hope of morning.

Furthermore, Rigby has shown how dangerous memories can be linked to action. For the oppressed, dangerous memories lend strength, identity, and a proleptic memory of what ought to be. For the oppressor, dangerous memories elicit confession, a desire to enter into authentic loving relationship with one's sisters and brothers, and a proleptic memory of what ought to be. All these aspects of dangerous memory have an immediate effect on present action. For the oppressed, when the reality of their oppression is joined to their "dangerous memories," the stimulus to act, the power to act, and the goals of one's actions are provided. For the oppressor, when their compassion and imaginative empathy with the oppressed is joined to their "dangerous memories," the stimulus to act, the power to act without pity, and the goals of one's actions are provided. In this way, Rigby has pow-

erfully delineated the relationship of memory, imagination, joy, and action.

I argued early in this essay that the traditional eschatological hope can temper either the pain or the guilt we feel when we apprehend tragic situations. If this hope tempers our feelings of responsibility and guilt, it is illegitimate. Those who cling to this hope must be conscious of its potential to function in this destructive way. But as we saw, our action is a function of our dangerous memories and imagination. As we remember those who have struggled and died without receiving personally the concrete liberation for which they struggled, belief in an eschaton can offer hope and comfort: it can help us cope with the pain of our memories. It need not, however, dull our sense that what was suffered was tragic or unjust. When thus construed, this hope can serve a positive function and in no way impedes the struggle for liberation.

I have attempted in this essay to affirm Rigby's insightful thesis concerning dangerous memories. Since these insights have an integrity independent of the question of eschatology, they can be appropriated constructively by theological conservatives, liberals, and radicals alike. This common ground should be claimed in the name of a more unified struggle for liberation to true community.

I have also tried to make clear how the question of eschatology is both distinct from and related to the dynamic of dangerous memories, imagination, action, and joy. Those who claim an eschatological hope must ensure that it neither impedes liberative action nor negates the meaningfulness of human history. Those who deny the reality of a traditional eschatological hope must not too quickly find metaphysical comfort in abstractions such as the "collective personhood" or "the struggle." If they are to name good and evil at all, they must name as evil the tragedies and injustices which have overtaken the majority of persons historically and deal with related "cosmodicy" questions.

All, however, should acknowledge memories which may be dangerous to them as either oppressor *or* oppressed (or both) and

join in the present struggle for justice and love of neighbor. If the issue of "eschatological hope" impedes any from engaging this common concern, they clearly are guilty of allowing theoretical abstractions to obstruct the concrete love of self and love of neighbor in the present.

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Eschatology and Hope: Toward an Understanding of the Function of Eschatological Language

DAVID M. FREEDHOLM

IN HER INSIGHTFUL AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING ARTICLE, Cynthia Rigby raises the issue of the relation between eschatology, memory, and hope. At the outset, Rigby recounts Johann Baptist Metz's argument that the Christian hope for justice should *not* be based on an "anticipation of a better day" (Rigby 1993:3) or "in the realm of the eschaton" (Rigby 1993:4). According to Rigby, Metz would have us give up the expectation of a future intervention by God in which things would get set right. For Metz, hope is to be derived from "the critical and liberating strength of dogmatic memory" (Rigby 1993:3), which is manifested in the present painful struggle to bring about justice. This rejection of a hope centered on eschatological expectation and the acceptance of a hope derived from memory become basic building blocks for and recurring themes in Rigby's article.

Rigby accepts—at least for the sake of argument—Metz's claim that hope is to be located in a theology of memory rather than in eschatology, though she rejects (via Segundo and Welch) the "radical pessimism" inherent in his viewpoint. What then of eschatology? Insofar as Rigby agrees with Metz—and to a lesser degree, Welch—she either reinterprets it or rejects it.

This happens in several ways. First, the tension between the "already" and the "not yet" is dissolved, and the "eschatological message" becomes a call for the believer to bring about justice in the present (Rigby 1993:3). This point is made again in connection with Metz's conception of the "dangerous memory" of Jesus Christ, a memory which calls Christians to change the oppressive structures of the world. According to Rigby, Metz's conception of the memory of Jesus Christ ultimately collapses the future into the present "so that the eschaton is here and now" (Rigby 1993:17). Second, eschatology is rejected as a basis for praxis. "Speculation" about the future distracts from critical discussion of important ethical matters (Rigby 1993:17). Third, eschatological expectation is sharply dismissed as a false promise of hope—a promise "that would have betrayed us and in fact is betraying us every day" and "robs us of responsibility" (Rigby 1993:19).

What are we to make of this effort to deny a connection between eschatology and hope, an effort that effectively places eschatology in the dustbin of worn-out doctrine? More to the point, what do I, as someone who reads and values eschatological texts in the New Testament, make of such an effort? Although I value what constitutes the bulk of Rigby's article—her explanation of the connection between memory and hope, joy, and freedom—we are left with the impression that we must make a choice between eschatological hope and the hope derived from memory. But does it necessarily follow that one excludes the other? I think not.

First, Metz is not as hostile to eschatology as it might appear.[1] Metz includes a chapter (chap. 10) in his *Faith in History and Society* that *affirms* the role of imminent expectation and apocalyptic theology in the production of hope. Metz says, rather

[1] For instance, it is not clear to me that the quote from Teilhard de Chardin which Rigby attributes to Metz (Rigby 1993:3–4; see Metz 1980:179) is an opinion he endorses. In fact, Metz may have intended this quote to exemplify an attitude against which he is warning us (though this is not entirely clear).

pointedly: "Imminent expectation ... provides hope, which has been pacified and led astray by the evolutionary ideal, with perspectives of time and expectation" (Metz 1980:177). It seems that Metz includes this chapter to guard against the false impression that his views exclude eschatology, or, as he puts it, "apocalyptic consciousness."

Thus, in his negative statements about eschatology, Metz is reacting to a certain type of eschatology or a certain way of reading eschatological or apocalyptic texts. His main concern is that expectation of the eschaton not lead persons to lives of inaction and disregard for injustice and oppression in this world. Surely eschatological—especially apocalyptic—texts have often been read in such a way as to lead to excessive navel-gazing, weird speculation, and ethical passivity. Even worse, these readings have sometimes led, as Rigby points out, to triumphalism or even gloating, as evil and suffering increase in the world. This sort of eschatological expectation has led to a false kind of hope and deserves critique and rejection. However, we should not let abuses of eschatological texts or doctrines lead to a rejection of eschatology as an ingredient in the production of hope.

Second, it is necessary to challenge the widespread idea that eschatology—especially apocalyptic eschatology—has no concern for ethics, since it focuses on a world other than our own. Through the years, the opinion has been advanced that apocalyptic literature has no ethical concern. In his book, *Old Testament Apocalyptic*, S. B. Frost contends that interest in ethics is "not a marked characteristic of apocalyptic in general. The truth is that all apocalypticists are so sure of the imminent coming of the eschaton that there is neither time for moral inquisition nor need of moral directive" (Frost 1952:212–213). In *Die Apokalyptik*, W. Schmithals says, "Apokalyptiker wie Gnostiker kennen keine Ethik" (1973:35).

Although this view is widely attested, the more attentive readers of apocalyptic literature have shown it to be false. Both R. H. Charles and Klaus Koch (among others) have argued that apoc-

alyptic literature actually has an intense interest in ethical matters. This has been borne out by the most detailed study of the matter to date, Christoph Münchow's *Ethik und Eschatologie*.[2] As Koch puts it, "The part played by ethics in the apocalypses cannot be too highly estimated" (Koch 1972:134n19).

In many cases, apocalyptic literature was written in direct response to times of crisis, turmoil, oppression, and suffering. For instance, Daniel, parts of 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and the Testament of Moses were written in response to the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes and to the events of the Maccabean revolt. The concern of these writings was precisely with this world; that is, with the place and behavior of the readers within this world. Thus, I would argue that eschatology has and can provide a basis for praxis *particularly* in contexts of suffering and oppression.

Reconsideration of the function of eschatological language may help to rehabilitate eschatology as a basis for hope. It may also address the thorny hermeneutical problem of how modern readers can appropriate eschatological texts in the New Testament. Eschatological texts have often been read as predictive or promissory manifestos, as "road maps of the future." It is this sort of reading that has led to the sort of complacent or triumphalistic attitudes described earlier. However, this is not the only way to read eschatological texts. We should read eschatological texts for what they are: imaginary or fictive depictions of a nonexistent future world. This is true for both prose texts, which are often full of metaphorical language (cf. Rom 13:11-14; 1 Thess 5:1-11), as well as for narrative texts (e.g., apocalypses and parables).

What does it mean to read eschatological texts as imaginary or fictive depictions of the future world? To sketch briefly an answer to this question, I will use as a starting point Paul Ricoeur's theory of imagination. According to Paul Ricoeur, imagination is "the free play of possibilities in a state of noninvolvement with

[2] Note here Münchow's statement, "Ethik und Eschatologie bedingen einander mit Notwendigkeit" (Münchow 1981:138).

respect to the world of perception or of action. It is in this state of noninvolvement that we try out new ideas, new values, new ways of being in the world" (Ricoeur 1991:174). Ricoeur argues that imagination and fiction, as types of imaginary discourse, have referential power. Fiction, according to Ricoeur, has a double valence with respect to reference: "because it designates the non-place in relation to reality, it can indirectly sight this reality" (Ricoeur 1991:175). Fiction, then, has the power to redescribe reality. "It has the capacity to open and unfold new dimensions of reality by means of our suspension of belief in an earlier description" (Ricoeur 1991:175).

Ricoeur goes on to connect imagination with praxis. Not only does fiction redescribe reality; it has a "projective function" that connects to praxis. He argues that it is in the "anticipatory imagination of acting that I 'try out' different possible courses of action and that I 'play,' in the precise sense of the word, with possible practices" (Ricoeur 1991:177).

I suggest, therefore, that we should read eschatological texts as texts which, by figuring another world, "redescribe" the reality of this world. They should be seen as imaginary models in which we try out new values, new ideas, and new ways of being in the world.

It is here that eschatology and eschatological language links up with the discussion of memory and hope. As Rigby notes, memory involves the use of imagination (Rigby 1993:9). Imagination not only helps us grapple with the facts of the past in order to bring healing; it also pushes these memories forward toward a future possibility: the way things should be. It is precisely in this future possibility that hope lies.

Therefore, eschatology, as the articulation or imaging of future possibility, reenters the equation and becomes an integral part of the production of hope. We need not choose between an eschatological hope and a hope based on memory. As Ricoeur puts it in reaction to what he sees as the danger of the existentialist reinterpretation of eschatology:

> If we wish to express freedom in the light of hope in appropriate psychological terms, it will be necessary to speak, with Kierkegaard again, of the *passion for the possible*, which retains in its formulation the mark of the future which the promise puts on freedom. (Ricoeur 1980:162)

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"Lest We Forget": The Power and the Problems of Dangerous Memory

BETH Y. LANGSTAFF

"The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!"
—Rudyard Kipling (*Recessional*, 1897)

CYNTHIA RIGBY POSES A QUESTION OF TREMENDOUS SIGNIFICANCE: "Is There Joy Before Morning?" In dialogue with the thought of Johann Baptist Metz and Sharon Welch, she explores the presence of joy and hope during the "night," the midst of the struggle against oppression. Wrapped up in this theme are many of the more crucial questions of the Christian faith, questions sharpened by the theology and events of the twentieth century: our understanding of God, of transcendence and immanence; our struggle with theodicy; the ethical task of the Christian community; the relevance of eschatology; our link with our past and with history.

MEMORY AND CONTEXT

Welch and Metz: Persons of the Twentieth Century

The works of Johannes Baptist Metz and Sharon Welch speak well to this question. They address a similar set of concerns: justice, liberation, resistance, and memory. Between them, they provide different windows into liberation theology, feminism, political activism, and post-modernism. The choice of a male and female, an American and a European, of different generations, also adds diversity.

Both Welch and Metz speak out of their own narratives. Welch teaches theology at Harvard Divinity School and participates in feminist and anti-nuclear activism. Her philosophy is expressed in the subtitle of her 1985 work: "A Feminist Theology of Liberation." She writes of injustice out of her own experience as a woman. She also identifies herself as white, American, and middle class, and therefore an oppressor (1985:ix).

Metz, a Catholic born and educated in Germany, teaches theology at the University of Münster. He serves on the board of the journal *Concilium*, which provides liberation theology with a base for its critique of modern society and Catholicism. Metz counts Hans Küng and Edward Schillebeeckx among his colleagues (Muggeridge 1986:163). In light of the importance laid upon memory rooted in personal experience, their respective backgrounds deserve more comment.[1]

Welch and Metz: Presuppositions

As Rigby notes, both Welch and Metz write in response to modern theology and philosophy. Neither finds the "traditional theologies of transcendence" to be adequate (Rigby 1993:19). Metz rejects the eschatology which hopes for a future Day of the Lord as "triumphalistic" and blind to present injustice (Rigby

[1] It would also be interesting to examine how Metz has influenced Welch. He is one of the theologians most cited in her work.

1993:18). Welch takes the rejection of transcendence one step further, applying it not only to theology but to epistemology: there are no eternal and absolute truths.

Truth, as a result, is diverse and plural; one can speak only of "truths." These "truths" are neither abstract nor general; they must be particular and concrete (Welch 1985:47). One cannot speak of God in transcendent abstraction; one can speak of God only in a specific act of liberation. Welch, acknowledging her debt to Foucault, posits that the "ideas, doctrines, and symbols of the Christian faith are understood in terms of their *function* in the struggles of people for liberation" (1985:47). Truth is personal: it arises out of the experience of community, oppression, and joy.

Yet both Metz and Welch in effect exchange the traditional focus of theology—a transcendent God—for a new transcendent principle. Welch offers a "pretheoretical commitment to the oppressed as the focus of theological reflection" (1985:35). Yet her choice of "justice" and "liberation" as overarching categories is *not* pretheoretical by any means. Her statement, "the oppression of people is of ultimate concern," is abstract, not concrete (1985:36).

Welch and Metz: The Pain of the Twentieth Century

Metz and Welch rightly speak of faith not in academic isolation, but in the midst of the twentieth century (as does Rigby in her introduction). The most horrifying of recent events—the Holocaust—dominates their theological landscapes. For all three, theology is theodicy. The Holocaust serves not as an example of memory, community, and liberating resistance; it is the antithesis of liberation and joy. The call to remember springs from the fervent conviction that this must never happen again.

The Holocaust both impels and challenges the question, "Is there Joy Before Morning?" Is God *here* at all? Where is the light in the blackest time of the night? Yet even as the Holocaust pushes that question to its limits, it also renders it meaningless. As Rigby concludes in the section given to this most dangerous mem-

ory, "the event of the Holocaust is only night" (1993:18). If there is no possibility of joy and no promise of morning here, where can there be? Does "morning" mean anything at all?

MEMORY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF JOY

Out of such backgrounds and in response to such events, Metz and Welch offer "dangerous memory" as a goad to personal reflection and to resistance. Joy becomes a possibility only as people dare to "remember" oppression, to share their stories, and to challenge their oppressors. Yet the concept of "dangerous memory" raises some equally "dangerous" questions.

The Power of Memory

Memory certainly has power—power that can hurt and heal, motivate or immobilize. But what are the limits of memory? Is it enough for oppressors to "remember" how they have oppressed others? Does recognition of prejudice bring the resources to overcome it? Is knowledge sufficient for reform on both an individual and a social level? The causal connection between memory and liberation begs examination.

First, what is the connection between memory and oppression? Citing Metz, Rigby posits that "loss of memory inevitably results in a loss of freedom" (1993:6). Yet this assertion places an even greater burden upon the oppressed. The unspoken message may be, "If only we had maintained our memories, we would not have become victims." But sometimes there is no "if only." In some cases, injustice simply prevails, memory or no memory. Metz claims that colonization and enslavement begin with the loss of memory (Rigby 1993:6). But did it matter whether or not the peoples of the African continent celebrated their stories? They were betrayed not by historical amnesia but by foreign economic interests. Dee Brown's graphic record of the Native American experience in *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee* demonstrates that tribal narrative ("dangerous memory"), even when it produces

determined resistance, is not enough. The memory of child abuse (Rigby 1993:8) demands a declaration of innocence: the child was *not* at fault. Perhaps the same assurance should be offered to peoples who have suffered injustice: "The guilt is not your own; you did not bring this upon yourselves, not even by failing to remember."

Second, what is the connection between memory and freedom? Sometimes evil, whether malevolent or indifferent, is simply too strong. Sometimes, as in the Holocaust, there is no escape for a person, for a people. Sometimes the recovery of memory only deepens the anguish. Memory identifies oppression but it does not guarantee freedom.

In the disturbing film, *The Dead Poets Society*, Robin Williams stars as the brilliant, unconventional teacher who challenges his students to resist the limits placed upon them. "Tear out the introduction," he tells them. "Think for yourselves." Yet even as he stirs their imagination and awakens their memory with "dead poets," he omits one crucial lesson: what do you do when freedom is denied? when imagination is shut in a cage? Even if one "accommodates," as Welch suggests, how long can one do so when there is no assurance of future freedom?

The Potential for Oppression

The danger involved in the memory of oppression is not only the failure of resistance. As Welch recognizes, there are no neat categories of oppressors and oppressed; both are reflected in their individual identities (1985:13). Rigby concurs in a footnote, noting that "a person may well be a victim in one situation and an oppressor in another" (1993:6). "Dangerous memory" must confess that the "danger" of oppression is within us. The oppressed must not only speak in terms of "they" but in terms of "we."

"Dangerous memory" locates evil in the structure and the system; Welch is guilty of oppression by virtue of her racial and economic identity. There is little sense of personal evil, still less

of a doctrine of sin. Yet to resist evil, one must first own it. G. K. Chesterton's fictional Father Brown explains,

> There are two ways of renouncing the devil, and the difference is perhaps the deepest chasm in modern religion. One is to have a horror of him because he is so far off; and the other to have it because he is so near. ... You may think a crime horrible because you could never commit it. I think it horrible because I could commit it. (1927:274)

Injustice is horrible because it is executed by human beings, and we all share that humanity and inhumanity. The abuse of power is hardly the prerogative of one particular group of persons. The peoples of former Yugoslavia were victims of a Communist regime; but unexpected freedom has too quickly created oppressors out of the ranks of the oppressed. The Jews who sought freedom in the newly created state of Israel after the Holocaust are now facing the challenge of power and accusations of oppression by Palestinians within their jurisdiction. Storytellers of oppression must be wary of whitewash, the tendency to omit one's own weakness.

MEMORY, STORY, AND HISTORY

Rigby's paper is concerned not only with the content and the power of "dangerous memory," but with the *expression* of memory. Drawing upon Welch and Metz, she explores "story" or "narrative" as the vehicle for memory.

The concept of memory, expressed through narrative, is set in contrast to history. Rigby, citing Catherine Keller, distinguishes between "reconstructing" and "reconstruing" past events (1993:9). "Reconstructing" deals with the past as "historical facts"; "reconstruing" seeks the implications and experience of the event. Narrative which springs from dangerous memory "verifies or falsifies itself"; it does not depend upon historically documented facts (Rigby 1993:11–12). Instead of being controlled by

objective facts, Metz argues, we must, using imagination, claim these facts as working for us (Rigby 1993:9).

This dismissal of history is puzzling. Surely the historical "facts" of oppression (as Dee Brown documented in the case of Native Americans) can confirm memory and challenge oppression. Perhaps the term *history* is being used in a sense that is both too objective and too subjective. History is "objective" in that it is cold facts, unwarmed by human experience. Is history "objective"? History is *not* objective in any absolute sense; historians must choose to tell this story rather than that, to include that event, to omit this detail. The concept of "dangerous memory" is a reminder that history as a discipline must constantly be wary of its own selectivity. Why do we select these events, these facts? What do we skim or skip entirely?

Yet "objectivity" is a double-edged sword. It should also serve to challenge and correct memory. History cannot (or least should not) pick and choose when it comes to the past: the plot, the characters, the outcomes may be reinterpreted, but they cannot be rewritten. History, in contrast to myth or legend, tells a story that is less simple, less black-and-white, more complex.

I wonder if "history" is at the same time seen to be too "subjective" to help memory: subjective because in recording the story of the powerful and the oppressor, it suppresses the story of the oppressed.

History has too often told an incomplete story. Historians must plead guilty here. In my Australian high school, for example, "history" began with the first European settlement of 1788, with only the briefest backward glance at millennia of Aboriginal history. Yet the historian can help to tell the untold stories. Surely there is a need for the recovery of the "historical facts" about the Philippines, for example: the colonial policies of Spain and America, the role played by multi-national corporations, the oppression of the Christian community. Such historical research should not threaten or thwart memory.

Neither must history ignore the emotional, human impact of events. Historians examine not only the event itself, but its effect

and interpretation; not only the narrative of politics and power (which must be told), but also the narrative of human experience as a whole. One should note the recent explosion of diverse ways of "doing history"—social, economic, popular—which have taken up this task with enthusiasm. William Bouwsma, for example, argues for a shift in emphasis from "raw historical experience" (what happens to people) to what people have made of that experience (1990:343). In fact, both are needed. Is it too optimistic to say that responsible history may actually aid memory: correct it, evoke it, challenge it?

CONCLUSION: MEMORY AND MORNING

My concern with the wedge between memory and history is even more basic. Where can we possibly find joy? Both Metz and Welch rule out divine intervention in the present; Welch presupposes the "absence of a problem-solving, transcendent God" in her definition of joy (Rigby 1993:4). Both also reject the promise of future intervention, an eschaton in which justice will triumph. This refusal to place justice in the hands of a transcendent God and in the eschaton (Rigby 1993:4) implies that justice is a present and human creation. It conflates ethics and eschatology. It radically reinterprets the Apostles Creed. The judgment of "the quick and the dead" signifies the present establishment of justice; "life everlasting" calls for freedom in the present. The Christian is "called upon in faith to bring about this freedom" (Rigby 1993:3). Instead of salvation history, we have the human struggle for liberation.

Metz and Welch do well to challenge any theology that is otherworldly, indifferent to present injustice, and resigned to the reign of evil. Metz demands that Christianity establish what is "now," not simply wait for the "not yet." But eschatology and ethics are not mutually exclusive. The book of Revelation, written in a time of oppression, offers both an ethical challenge and an assurance of future deliverance by a transcendent God.

The rejection of transcendence and eschatology seems to leave human history—the events of oppression and liberation—as the only possible context for joy. Yet the "historical facts" are "predominantly joy-less" (Rigby 1993:13). Where then is the joy? Does it exist only in myth? In the ahistorical narrative of the community? In memory?

Rigby opened with the question: Is there joy before morning? Metz rejects the promise of a future morning as a betrayal (Rigby 1993:16): at best, one can preserve only the memory of darkness. For Welch, joy is possible without morning; in fact, it is possible without light. Memory does not necessarily bring liberation, but it does create community, and within that community one may find joy. Yet is it enough to share the darkness? Do companions make the night more bearable if there is no assurance of dawn? Rigby acknowledges that these unresolved questions beg another paper. That paper deserves to be written.

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Is There Morning Without Joy? The Religious Experience of the Guatemalan Amerindians Under Fire

CARLOS F. CARDOZA ORLANDI

CYNTHIA RIGBY'S PAPER REFLECTS A THEOLOGIAN'S STRUGGLE with oppressive situations in society and with her faithfulness to a transcendent God. Rigby tries to make sense of the principle of Christian faith in a transcendent God in light of the suffering and injustice in society. It is a serious and profound attempt that deserves our attention and appreciation.

Rigby's struggle with the theme of "dangerous memory" brings to my own memory the fact that in October 1992, peoples from all over the world were celebrating the arrival of Europeans to the Americas. The Roman Catholic Church celebrated its Fourth Episcopal Meeting in Santo Domingo and the word *evangelization* was triumphantly proclaimed.

Others were not celebrating. Rather, they were remembering the tragic consequences that both the Amerindian community and the forcefully brought African slaves have suffered since 1492. Their suffering included exploitation, isolation from their culture, and death. This cultural-geographical genocide under the banner of evangelization has been called by Gustavo Gutiérrez, "the demographic collapse." October 1992 provided an opportunity for various peoples to construe their "dangerous memory" and their stories of tragedy, misery, and death in different ways.

This historical event, taken lightly and even indifferently by many theological institutions in the United States and Latin America, has a major significance for those of us South of the Río Grande. Culturally and ethnically, it tells us who we are. It speaks about the conditions in which our people emerged; the complexities of our own Amerindian-European-African existence; the fascination/desperation of having in our deepest collective memory the experience of plurality and annihilation.

Socially and economically, it allows us to see the continuity of the different ideological frameworks that have kept our people submitted to poverty, misery, and death. Ironically, it allows us to look at 500 years of resistance and struggle that need to be remembered and supported—not only for the benefit of history and political strategy, but because it is the means of life for so many around the world.

From a third world[1] perspective, "dangerous memory" is a critical factor in the liberation struggle for all human beings. The question is whether Rigby's interpretation (epistemological understanding) and application (ethical responsibility) are comprehensive enough to subvert oppression and create a radical conversion for the poor.

A CRITIQUE OF "IS THERE JOY BEFORE MORNING?"

What is the theological and praxeological proposal in "Is There Joy Before Morning?" First, the paper has an unstated assumption that "dangerous memory" begins with the individual's subjectivity. According to Rigby's interpretation of Metz and Welch, it is the "remembering individual" who "allows memory to exert its initiating, often overwhelming power" (Rigby 1993:7). Rigby

[1] I am using the term "third world," although after the fall of socialism in what was the Soviet Union, there has been a debate about what to call the Southern Hemisphere. At least the term "third world" depicts a geographical area that remains under-developed and in the back row of the economic project of the capitalistic enterprise.

apparently accepts as an undisputable truth that memories have a life of their own in the mind of the individual. Individual and memory—separate entities in the subjectivity of a person—are in the process of finding each other. They give memory the capability to emerge suddenly in the consciousness of the individual and create in the person the "dangerous memory." After this psychological drama takes place, it is the "remembering individual" who has the task of articulating properly his or her own memory in an effective story that will contribute to a communal process of liberation.

This individualistic understanding of "dangerous memory" lacks the deeper insights a broader approach would bring. Emile Durkheim is an important principal in the field of sociology of religion and one whom researchers need to remember as they engage in the study of society and religion. Durkheim says, "A society is not made up merely of the mass of individuals who compose it, the ground which they occupy, the things which they use and the movements which they perform, but above all is the idea which it forms of itself" (Durkheim 1965:470). In addition, he states: "Thus, the collective ideal which religion expresses is far from being due to a vague innate power of the individual, but it is rather at the school of collective life that the individual has learned to idealize" (1965:470).

The intricacies of construing "dangerous memory" go far beyond the individual, even beyond the "remembering individual." Everyone's own construing of "dangerous memory" is shaped by the symbols, rituals, and worldview of the community or society in which he or she lives. The different levels of social ethos in a given society must be named and investigated in order to perceive the conflict between what a community is and what it is struggling to become. Consequently, the construing of a "dangerous memory" is in itself a problem.

Rigby's second unstated assumption is that the process by which the "remembering individual" constructs the memory is psychologically rational. Remembering is a highly subjective pro-

cess guided by the memory itself to help the individual come to terms with his or her own self. Rigby's interpretation of Metz suggests that this subjective process is the struggle for freedom, the most important factor for people to begin the process of liberation.[2]

If there is to be any attempt at construing "dangerous memory" among the poor—especially the poor in the third world—one must go beyond the European–North Atlantic traditional method, which puts the rational individual in the center of reality.[3] Molefi Kete Asante criticizes this Euro-centric linear approach in his book, *The Afrocentric Idea*. Asante says,

> Human beings tend to recognize three fundamental existential postures one can take with respect to the human condition: feeling, knowing, and acting. Afrology recognizes these three stances as interrelated, not separate. Europeans normally call these categories *affective, cognitive, and conative* (1987:16–17; emphasis mine).

The categories of the *affective* and *conative* go beyond the rational subjectivity of the individual. Through communal expressions, they affect the subjectivity of a person by providing information, feelings, emotions, an understanding of the cosmos, and a sense of responsibility far more than the *cognitive* category alone.

An example that illustrates how these nonlinear categories can evoke profound sentiments and values is found in *rhythm* as an element of communication among African, African-American, Asian, and Latin American people. Regarding rhythm, Asante explains:

[2] To be fair, Rigby later tries to include feelings and action in the process of construing "dangerous memory," but the attempt falls short.

[3] I am not necessarily speaking of the "white-male-European" approach here. Many other approaches, some of which are quite European, are aware of and try to move beyond white-male-European assumptions.

> Rhythm in spoken discourse is a basic measure of the successful speech. How well a speaker can regulate his flow of words with the proper pauses of audience 'indentations' becomes the standard for the black speaker [and, I add, the third world speaker] before a basically black audience. Henry Mitchell refers to this as establishing 'a kind of intimate fellowship.' (Asante 1987:38)

This "intimate fellowship" is created not only by words in rational process, but it is also the result of a feeling that enables the community to be "seduced," to be "removed" from reality into a sphere of ecstasy and pleasure that has no parallel.

This is what allows a church leader in a Latin American Pentecostal church to find the climax of the service not in the "Spoken Word of God," but in the free and spontaneous worship. By no means should this free and spontaneous worship be understood as individualistic. Rather, it is the time in which the whole community experiences the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

The cultural analysis of society reveals that these categories interrelate in a fascinating way, especially in relation to religious experience. Any attempt to comprehend the epistemology of the poor needs an understanding of the *substratum culturae* of the poor. That is, one needs to understand the "internal structure of culture itself" (Wuthnow 1992:52). Asante states the importance of culture in the process of liberation as follows:

> Indeed, culture is the most revolutionary stage of awareness, that is, culture in the sense that Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, and Maulana Karenga have written about. This is at the macro-level of education, and includes science, music, engineering, architecture, dance, art, philosophy, and economics. When we move away from an Eurocentric framework we become more innovative. We know that it is difficult to create freely when you use someone else's motifs, styles, images, and perspectives. Thus, the

> Afrocentric awareness is the total commitment to African liberation anywhere and everywhere by a consistent determined effort to repair any psychic, economic, physical, or cultural damage done to Africans. It is further a pro-active statement of the faith we hold in the future of African [*sic*] itself. (Asante 1992:50)

I believe that Rigby's understanding of the process of construing "dangerous memory" is still too *cognitive*. Hence, the *affective* and *conative* aspects of the human being, which are equally important—and sometimes more important than the *cognitive*—are left behind.

Another element that from the third world perspective is in tension with Rigby's proposal is the process of transforming the individual's "dangerous memory" into a shared story in a community of solidarity. Rigby proposes that memories are communicated by stories. As these stories are shared with others, those who receive can also "remember" and share their own stories—and, consequently, become a community of solidarity.

However, in order to create a "dangerous story," it is necessary for a story to be *meaningful* not only to the individual, but to the whole community. In other words, "dangerous stories" need to have a religious character; they need to point to ultimate meanings. A story needs to evoke feelings and emotions that go beyond the comprehension of the community. It needs to create reflection, mystery, and awe. It needs to be articulated not in words, but in enacted performance. It has to be powerful enough to be incorporated into the rituals of the community. It needs to be seductive in order to move people—especially poor people—to confront purveyors of injustice and to struggle for liberation.

From a Latin American perspective, subjective commonality is simply not enough to move the poorest of the poor to confront the evils of oppression and exploitation. It is not enough to create a political agenda, since they have experienced for 500 years the empty words of different political projects. There is a need for a

meaningful and *ultimate principle* that will empower the poor to engage in the ethical and political consequences of their own liberation.

Rigby lacks the answer to the most important and fundamental question: What is it that makes stories meaningful? Her analysis relies on the individualistic and rational principles that characterize the white Protestant tradition in the North-Atlantic setting, but it does not explain how "dangerous memory" is construed in the context of third world conflicts (or even in the confusing context of the Northern Hemisphere).

What makes a story meaningful? To understand this important question, we must go beyond our abstract language and examine a particular case, a micro-cosmos that will help us see and understand the macro-cosmos. We need to ask about the cultural and social factors among the poor that give form and content to their aspirations and hopes, and that are represented in their religious life.

The Guatemalan Amerindian and the fundamentalist missionary agency, Central American Mission (CAM) International, provide an interesting example for such an investigation. Although this is not an example of political liberation, but rather of persecution, oppression, and passivity, it supports our argument. The missionary-theological mediation of CAM International has resulted in an interpretation of reality that has contributed to the suffering and death of many Amerindians. The increasing missionary presence in convulsive Latin America often provides an ideological-theological schema that justifies criminal actions. Furthermore, the ideological-theological schema that CAM International produced is similar to the ideological-theological schema of the Spanish and Portuguese Crown during colonization 500 years ago. Evangelization continues to be *violent* in many parts of Latin America!

CAM INTERNATIONAL AND THE GUATEMALAN AMERINDIANS, 1978–1988

The Central American Mission, now known as CAM Interna-

tional, was founded by Cyrus I. Scofield in 1890. Since then, it has been recognized as one of the most influential missionary agencies in Central America. Their most effective work has been done among the Amerindians, especially those in Guatemala.

CAM International falls under the category of "faith missions." Their fundamental principle is to preach the gospel to the Spanish-speaking people of Central America. Under the banner of missionary endeavor, CAM International has played important roles in the cultural and political lives of the Amerindian populations. We will try to identify the missionary mediation of the Christian story that gave meaning to the Guatemalan Amerindian poor during times of oppression and persecution.

The Amerindians During the Ríos Montt Regime[4]

The situation of the Amerindians of Guatemala during this period was atrocious, according to reports of Amnesty International. Charles D. Brockett provides a brief account of the time in his book, *Land, Poverty and Power*:

> In fact, the reign of terror in the countryside intensified under Ríos Montt. Among the primary findings of an American Watch Committee (1983) mission to Guatemalan refugee camps in southern Mexico were:
>
> 1. The Guatemalan governments's counterinsurgency program, begun in early 1982, has been continued and expanded by the Ríos Montt government and remains in effect at this time.
>
> 2. A principal feature of this campaign is the systematic murder of Indian non-combatants (men, women and chil-

[4] For a social history of Montt's military regime and its connections with North American Evangelicals, see David Stoll's *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?*

> dren) of any village, farm or cooperative, that the army regards as possibly supportive of the guerrilla insurgents or that otherwise resists army directives.
>
> 3. Although civilian men of all ages have been shot in large numbers by the Guatemalan army, women and children are particular victims; women are routinely raped before being killed; children are smashed against walls, choked, burned alive or murdered by machete or bayonet ... .
>
> 5. Incidental to its murder of civilians, the army frequently destroys churches, schools, livestock, crops, food supplies and seeds belonging to suspect villages, cooperatives or private farms. An apparent purpose and clear effect is to deprive entire villages and farm communities of the food necessary for survival ... .
>
> 8. The Guatemalan armed forces make extensive and conspicuous use of helicopters, mortars and incendiary bombs in attacking rural villages, in destroying and burning crops, and in harassing refugees seeking to escape and routinely use helicopters for surveillance camps in Mexico ... .
>
> 10. It is widely known within the refugee community, and among displaced Indians in Guatemala, that the principal supplier of such helicopters—and principal supporter of the Ríos Montt government—is the United States. (1983:116)

This was the general scenario of the situation suffered by the Amerindian community of Guatemala. By 1982, Amnesty International reported that 2600 persons were assassinated under the Ríos Montt government. In 1983 the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal held hearings on the violation of human rights under Montt's govern-

ment. "The Tribunal found the government guilty of tortures, physical malnutrition, infanticide, and massacres" (Zorrilla 1984:340–341).

The persecution of the Amerindian community in the highlands was based on their supposed participation in the guerrilla movement. The government accused many Amerindians of cooperating with the leftists. Much repression and death resulted from this suspicion. CAM International had the largest Amerindian church in Guatemala. How did their interpretation of the situation contribute to the emerging attitude of nonpolitical involvement? How did it provide profound meaning? How did its theology inform the situation the Amerindians were enduring?

The Missionaries, the Mission, and the Amerindians

The radio ministries, important for the evangelistic task of CAM International, suffered from the political unrest of the country. The editor of the CAM International Bulletin interprets the situation as follows:

> TGNA's ministry has never been more important than at this time when Guatemala's political future is uncertain and the *same subversive elements which have been active in Nicaragua and El Salvador now operate in the country.*
>
> The gigantic struggle with Satanic opposition and the powers of darkness can only be won as you pray. (CAM International 1980:12; emphasis mine)

The above extract from a letter reveals the rationalization the CAM International missionaries were providing for the political turmoil in Guatemala. First, the conflicting circumstances were given a special symbolic reference. The war was not just a war among people; it was a spiritual war, a war against Satan and his powers manifested in the subversive elements of the region. In premillenial thought, this interpretation of the political events pro-

vided the Amerindians with an important hermeneutical key: *authority*. The struggles between God and Satan were part of the history of all humanity. However, there was the faith assurance that the spiritual war would be won by Christ, the Risen Victor. Ultimately, the interpretation that the political turmoil was the manifestation of a spiritual war provided the Amerindians with an assurance that in the end, they, the faithful, would have the victory.

Second, according to the missionaries, the Amerindians depended on this ministry for their spiritual life. It was a means of communication that would provide the gospel, and thus, the proper symbolism and interpretation of the current events among the Amerindians. The Gutes, CAM International missionaries, commented,

> Yes, we're still on the air. Radio Maya hasn't missed a day because of lack of diesel fuel! ... .
>
> Our six chapels in the Ixcán lowlands are closed. Believers are scattered. From these scattered ones we get occasional word that they are depending on the radio for teaching and encouragement. *May this scattering result in the spreading of the Gospel to other areas, as it did in the early church*! This is our prayer. (Gute 1983:9; emphasis mine)

The radio ministry was not merely providing the message of the gospel. It was also providing a common center, a magnet of solidarity, *a totem of sacredness*, for all of those who were suffering the consequences of war.[5] The constructed affinity between the Christian diaspora and the required mobilization of the Amer-

[5] In my experience as a pastor in rural Puerto Rico, it was common for members of the church to have the radio tuned to a Christian station throughout the day. I asked one of our women deacons the reason for this practice. She answered that this was a way in which the Christian could keep in touch with the power of the Holy Spirit!

indians provided an adequate rationalization of the tragic consequences of war as an opportunity for evangelization. The Amerindians were told, through this constructed affinity, that they were now the ideal primitive community of the New Testament, called to transform suffering for the glory of God. In effect, the radio ministry nurtured the Amerindians with biblical symbols and interpretations of the symbols in a way that brought a sense of community to all the Amerindians who shared the same fate.

Furthermore, the evangelistic enterprise was so important to CAM International and to their theological rationale that even during the worst of times, national leaders received a call for ministry to the refugees. Bill and Margie Veith narrate an experience:

> Several weeks ago, four Indian pastors heard the call from hundreds of refugees along the Mexican border. These people are *homeless, discouraged, and hungry for the love and Word of God*: 'Come and help us. We are hungry for the Word of God. We feel so alone here. Do you hear us pleading? Come over and help us.'
>
> Four pastors answered the call. As they sat at our table and dined, they were excited about going to visit these people despite the *possible dangers*. They left us with joy in their hearts and with a love and zeal for their people that we shall never forget.
>
> That was the last we saw of them. They have never returned. They were to have stayed a week, but there has been no word about them. Their families are frantic. Today I had a telephone call and two visits concerning lost husbands and fathers. Pray with us that the Lord will bring glory to His name through this tragedy. (Veith 1983:11; emphasis mine)

These three references in missionaries' letters provide an interesting example of the kind of mediation missionaries were giving to

the Amerindians. CAM International did not offer an interpretation that would encourage opposition to the government. Rather, they were providing the Amerindians with an interpretation of the Christian story that would uphold the Christian faith *and* the premillenial worldview. Thus, it provided a sense of *authority* in the midst of vulnerability, of *community* while being segregated, and *meaning* in the midst of persecution and death.

The rationalization within the Amerindian community under this missionary mediation provided a source of certainty in the troubling context of distress and suffering. Whether we agree with the missionary mediation of CAM International is not our concern here. Our point is that this missionary mediation provided meaning. Ironically, that which provided meaning for the Amerindians also provided the perfect worldview for their systematic annihilation.

Authority, community, and meaning are three important factors which, for the poor, are essential. The Amerindian context of powerlessness, isolation, and marginalization is the perfect cultural and social condition for assuring that a story of *authority, community, and meaning* become permanent and acquire a transcendent character. The fact that Amerindians have understood their struggles in and through religious symbolism adds to the "affinities" between the *substratum culturae* of the poor and the fundamentalist-missionary mediation of CAM International.

Our insights certainly need further analysis, especially from the Amerindian perspective. However, it is indisputable that this fundamentalist missionary mediation has had an impact among the poor.[6] The Christian story mediated through CAM International provided the poor with a meaningful religious experience that was

[6] Some Latin American sociologists and historians have identified the Latin Americans' behavior and acceptance of this mediation as Latin American fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is much more than just acceptance of one type of message and behavior. The fact that there is a fundamentalist mediation of the Christian message does not mean that those who accept the message will be or can be called fundamentalist. The phenomenon is much more complex.

far from contributing to the liberation process. That is the sad reality. Meaningful experience is the second best choice when social transformation is not possible. Regrettably, there can be morning without joy.

We do not agree with this Christian interpretation. We agree even less with the missionary endeavor that carries this theological rationale. However, if we are to be engaged in liberation, we must go beyond the Eurocentric perspective Rigby presents in her paper. Even more, we in the third world need to take more seriously the cultural contours of our poor and to search for those essential affinities between our culture and our struggle for liberation. We need to seek "a meaningful and ultimate principle in the depth of our political agendas and subjective commonalities"[7] that will move our poor people into liberation.

This is the hope that Christians involved in liberation seek. Perhaps in this way we can begin to create a meaningful liberation, the first and best choice for our people whose life is in constant threat. Maybe the time will come when the sun will be seen by those who live in the darkness of midnight. Maybe there will be joy before morning.

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Hoping for Morning: Some Final Opening Thoughts

CYNTHIA L. RIGBY

MOST OF US ARE UNDERSTANDABLY THREATENED WHEN OUR conceptions of what constitutes "hope" are challenged. While specific hopes are often shared by a particular community, hope is also of deep personal import. Even in academic environments, which tend to eschew regularized appeal to mystery and to discourage ultimate reliance on that which lies outside human understanding, some of us secretly work to protect our hopefulness. Hope offers us good reasons to gamble on tomorrow even when things are bad today. It also gives us a way to verify the significance of present events that seem to support our desired life-course. Hope helps us both to live and to make sense of life.

Pak's hesitancy to embrace an "ethic of risk" which is annexed to any authentic conception of "dangerous memory" testifies to this widespread reluctance to abdicate traditional notions of hope. Pak's preference for an "ethic of faithfulness" as an alternative to an "ethic of risk" involves a calculated refusal to qualify in any way the unconditional guarantee of God's promises "despite how things may seem" (1993:35). Dangerous memory is too risky, Pak argues, because it holds the possibility of loss as well as the possibility of injury (1993:35). And yet is it not the case that our faithfulness as God's people actually *requires* such risk-taking? A hope which preserves us from the hazards of risk

might at the same time hinder our faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To what degree is it possible to draw upon the benefits of dangerous memory without subjecting our hopes to severe reappraisal? Greenway argues that the phenomenon of dangerous memory can be addressed without linking it intricately to a critique of eschatology (1993:43). Why, then, did I include this sticky issue in my essay? It would be misleading to consider dangerous memory apart from its threatening challenge to traditional conceptions of Christian hope. Welch and Metz understand dangerous memory both as a corrective to common eschatological discussion and as fundamentally incompatible with reliance upon a transcendent, intervening God. We cannot be authentically committed to the liberating power of dangerous memory unless we take a hard look at the way we conceive of God in relation to human history.

If we are fully to support the work of social justice, then, must we begin by ridding ourselves of all reliance on hopefulness? One of the major issues in each of the responses to the "dangerous memory" essay is the question of whether hope by its very nature points us in the direction of irresponsibility. Is "hope" of any sort inherently prone to escapism? Or is it possible to delineate between different types of hope: those which distract us from acting in the present and those which enable us constructively to work toward a better future?

While Metz focuses great energy in denouncing that hope which fosters passive waiting on an "eschatological 'Day of the Lord,'" Freedholm argues that Metz does not intend to reject all types of eschatological hopefulness. Freedholm's commitment, which he identifies also in Metz, is that there is a kind of eschatology which actually serves as an impetus to the work of social justice and is therefore decidedly ethical in nature. As Freedholm helpfully notes, Metz's intention is not to reject outright all eschatological language. Metz is rejecting a *specific abuse* of eschatology he thinks is widespread and whose effects cannot be underes-

timated (cf. Freedholm 1993:55). In other words, Metz operates with an awareness that eschatological language carries the possibility of—even a propensity toward—distortion.

The "proper" use of eschatological categories can be seen in Metz's discussion of imagination and its relationship to memory. According to Metz, remembering the oppressions of the past (rather than on counting on a perfected future) enables us to make the distinction between what *is* and what *should be*. Metz's talk of the future stems from the recognition, through the work of imagination, that the present situation is not good enough. It is not through imagining an ideal future that people come to realize that the present is not what it should be (this would be indicative of that type of eschatology which is unacceptable to Metz). Rather, when people recognize past and present pain, they are filled with the determination to act differently in the present so that the future might be better.

Greenway also holds that we must not too glibly rule out "hope" as an unhelpful category, suggesting that there are at least two types of situations in which denying a person his or her hope for a better promised future would be inhumane. First, drawing upon the thought of Simone Weil, Greenway argues that those who are truly afflicted (and therefore have no possibility for relief in this world) are clearly not those in danger of escapism in their reliance on hope. Afflicted persons have no option but to be involved in the struggle. Their need is to be comforted rather than challenged. Hope protects their humanity when the "joy inherent in the struggle" is not enough (Greenway 1993:43–44).

Second, citing the work of Beverly Harrison, Greenway notes that concepts of "otherworldliness" do not always remove persons from the struggle of this world, but can actually serve to empower the oppressed. The issue here is "context": those who live with the constant threats of poverty and of political turmoil do not have the luxury of removing themselves from the struggle against oppression. Hope for a better day will not hinder those suffering oppression from engaging in the work of dangerous

memory. Such hope will instead infuse their struggle with needed energy. Those who are the beneficiaries of a qualitatively different context—one in which it is possible, for example, to spend exorbitant amounts of time and energy writing, reading, and debating about papers such as these—are more apt to lay claim to otherworldliness in ways that are "merely escapist" (Greenway, citing Harrison, 1993:45).

The account provided by Cardoza Orlandi illustrates the tragedy that can result when those from a more powerful socioeconomic context exploit a suffering people's need for empowering eschatological hope by coercing them into escapist conceptions. Stories "provided by" those who are in significant ways outside the oppressed community and stories "constructed" with the goal of "seducing" the oppressed into action (or inaction) are *not* the stories of dangerous memory (Cardoza Orlandi 1993:80–83, 74–75). What "makes stories meaningful" is precisely the fact that they are the stories of a particular community and that they have arisen from the midst of this community itself (Cardoza Orlandi 1993:75). As a white middle-class North American, I cannot formulate the stories of the Amerindians of Guatemala. I may participate only as a listener or when I am invited by this community to share my own stories. As a member of the Latin American community, Cardoza Orlandi can declare, for the purposes of his essay, that "the missionary mediation of CAM International is not our concern" (Cardoza Orlandi 1993:82). As a member of the North American community which has been consistently guilty of the oppressive colonization of third world countries, such missionary mediation *must* be my concern. I will not dismiss my dangerous memory; I will participate no longer in constructing the stories of others.

Langstaff pinpoints a central question which emerges when one faces squarely dangerous memory's challenge to traditional conceptions of hope. With no guarantee that the future will be better, we are left to find meaning in the struggle of the present. "Is it enough to share the darkness?" Langstaff candidly asks, strug-

gling particularly with the "solution" to this dilemma which Welch seems to offer (1993:64). Perhaps Metz would say that this question raises a moot point; we who want to deal realistically with our world have no other choice but to work in the dark, for darkness is what surrounds us, at least for now. Metz does not intend to eliminate the possibility of a better future, but reminds us that the future lies in continuity with the development of the present. The present leaves us with little reason to think that things will improve, Metz implies.

We might say, following Welch, that it is not enough to "share the darkness." But Welch would remind us that the darkness of the struggle is not all we have. When human beings are united in their work for liberation, they experience joy in the midst of the darkness. Pushing this metaphor to its limits, we might describe this joy as that which shines through the night's darkness as stars of human dignity, planets of interdependence, and a moon of hope. This joy does not depend on the coming of a sunrise. Clearly, for Welch, there *is* joy before morning, and this joy makes tolerable the sharing of darkness.

The strength of Welch's position is that it allows for joy *before* and therefore *without* the realization of a *telos*. But this is not to imply that communities of resistance do not desire to achieve specific goals nor that concrete successes cannot contribute significantly to the community's joyful participation in human life. Welch's substitution of *joy* for *hope* is far from accidental (Greenway 1993:43–44). Joy improves significantly on hope, the structure of Welch's ethic implies, because its potency is not contingent on future confirmation. While those who rely on the promise of a better future may grow weary of waiting for that coming day, those who gain strength from the struggle of the present can continue in their work to usher in that day. Even those who grow weak in the course of the struggle are strong in the context of joy: individual weakness fosters that communal interdependence which inspires further acts of resistance.

In the history of Christian thinking, finitude and interdependence have not been given due credit for their work in nurtur-

ing communities of faith. And yet Welch is overly optimistic in her proposal that joy is always compatible with the frailties of human existence. Welch does not pay great heed to the category of "sin"; nor does she seem to fear that communities of resistance will ever come to participate in oppressive power struggles. While the escapist proposal that the oppressed are actually oppressors-in-waiting is to be avoided, it is naive to assume that mutuality is the rule in all communities of resistance. In her best-selling book *Backlash*, for example, Susan Faludi offers disturbing documentation of how profeminist communities of resistance (such as that which founded and supported *Ms.* magazine) often come to participate in the very patriarchal power structures they initially set out to oppose (cf. Faludi 1992:108–111). We are compelled to ask Welch: why does this happen? Perhaps her answer would be that in such cases the memories—and their danger—have been forgotten and need to be re-remembered.

Welch's ethic, developed in a context in which suffering can be and is being ignored, does not leave us the option of relying upon hope in the eschaton or the intervention of a transcendent God. When these categories enable our escape from the suffering of the world, we must recognize that we are distorting them for our own gain. We must allow dangerous memory to apply its risky and liberating power. But when we have exhausted the resources of ourselves and our community, when we need our hope-full belief system in order to continue engaging in the work of liberation (rather than to escape from such work), then we are justified in relying on such empowering conceptions.

In one way or another, all five respondents posed the question, Is it possible to believe in something or someone outside ourselves and still benefit fully—or even more fully—from the work of dangerous memory? In this brief reply I have tried to highlight some of the critical questions that have been raised in relation to this concern and to draw together some suggestions for when a commitment to eschatological hope and to the providential activity of a transcendent God can serve to *propel* rather than to *inhibit* the work of social justice.

We who work out of a privileged context should not jump too quickly and confidently to a synthesis between dangerous memory and eschatological hope. Respecting the work of Welch and Metz, we must first come to an understanding on the deepest level of the ways in which distorted eschatological language has served to perpetuate injustice. Then we must learn how to discern between those eschatological and transcendent beliefs which foster joy in the present and those which offer "morning" only to those who agree to remain without memories in the oppressive night.

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Book Reviews

In Search of "Ancient Israel." By Philip R. Davies. JSOT Supplement Series, No. 148. JSOT Press, 1992, 172 pages.

"This is a book about history, though it is not another 'History of Israel': that genre is probably obsolete" (p. 11). Thus Davies, who is Reader in Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield, commences his provocative and sweeping reappraisal of "ancient Israel." Although Davies explicitly indicates that this slim volume is intended more for students than for colleagues (p. 7), its scope and argument will engage his colleagues as well.

Davies helpfully identifies at the outset three Israels: the literary or biblical Israel, the historical Israel (the inhabitants of the northern Palestinian highlands during part of the Iron Age), and "ancient Israel" (what scholars have constructed from a combination of the two other Israels; p. 11). A particular strength of this work is that Davies consistently maintains these distinctions throughout the discussion. In short, the author boldly challenges the unspoken scholarly assumption that one can begin a study of "ancient Israel" without a critical analysis of what one actually means by "Israel."

Chapter 1, "Preliminaries," sets the stage for the subsequent unfolding of Davies's thesis. In chapters 2–4, Davies deals specif-

ically with each of the three Israels which he has isolated. He vigorously critiques the scholarly construct of "ancient Israel" in chapter 2. He asks why scholars have taken for granted that "ancient Israel" is an accessible historical entity. Davies maintains that

> there is no searching for the *real* (historical) ancient Israel because such a search is not thought to be necessary; but the thesis of this book is that a search *is* necessary, since 'ancient Israel' is *not* an historical construct, and that it therefore has displaced something that *is* historical. (p. 22)

Davies directs searing criticism at much of contemporary biblical scholarship, or "pseudo-scholarship" (p. 47), because of its theological shackles, which prevent it from taking a hard-nosed look at the historical reality of Iron Age Palestine.

Having concluded that the biblical Israel is a literary construct—a construct which does not correspond to the real historical Israel—Davies attempts to isolate a society during the Persian and Hellenistic periods which could have been responsible for "the generation of that ideological construct which is the biblical Israel" (p. 75). Davies concludes chapter 5, "The Social Context of the Biblical Israel," by positing the fifth century B.C.E. as the time and Yehud as the place for the formation of the biblical literature.

In chapter 6, "Who Wrote the Biblical Literature, and Where?" an effort is made to determine the circumstances in which the biblical literature must have been written and to identify an appropriate institutional context. In short, it is within the sphere of the temple and court—where scribal schools, archives, and libraries are located—that the authors of the biblical literature are to be found.

Chapter 7 constitutes Davies's efforts to discern how and why the biblical literature was written. He proposes three stages for the composition of the literature. First, the "historical" mater-

ial was created (Genesis to Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah). Second, the existing historical and "quasi-legal" literature was adopted as a cultural, then a religious standard for particular groups. Also, religious compositions (the Psalms) and pious glossing were added. Third, there was "the official establishment of a set of writings as a national archive, with the cultural and religious authority that impels it on its way towards canonization" (p. 114). The "ruling caste" in fifth-century Judah was a newly constructed society with an identity crisis. The creation of the biblical literature was an exercise in self-definition by this ruling elite. Davies takes intentional imaginative liberties in the formulation of much of the argument of this chapter.

Davies addresses in chapter 8 the transition from the production of the biblical literature to its "achievement of a more or less finished form and its adoption by certain individuals and groups as the basis of a national culture" (p. 134). In the relatively brief concluding chapter, Davies zeroes in on the crucial role he believes the Hasmonaeans played in giving the biblical literature a national, official, and ultimately authoritative status.

In Search of "Ancient Israel" commends itself in a number of important respects. First, as we noted above, Davies consistently distinguishes between three distinct definitions of "Israel." His plea for increased clarity with respect to "Israel" is well-taken. Second, the author makes a valiant—and in the estimation of this reviewer, largely successful—effort to determine what can be known about the historical Israel apart from the portrait found in the biblical literature. Davies contends that in much scholarly work, the "assumption that the literary construct is an historical one is made to confirm itself" (p. 38). Such concern to eliminate "tail chasing" (p. 36) holds great potential for opening up new vistas in the scholarly study of "ancient Israel." Third, Davies gives fresh and imaginative attention to the oft-neglected Persian and Hellenistic periods in the history of "Israel."

The volume contains a bibliography of works cited, an index of authors, and an index of sources (including nonbiblical sources,

the Bible, the Pseudepigrapha, and the New Testament). Interestingly, there are no references in the indices to either Exodus 15 (Song of the Sea) or Judges 5 (Song of Deborah), passages held by many scholars to be among the earliest biblical materials, predating the monarchy. It is unclear what significance, if any, Davies attributes to such important pericopae in relation to his general thesis. Unfortunately, there is no subject index.

This fine work is seriously marred by the existence of a multitude of typographical and grammatical errors. I counted no fewer than 72 such mistakes. Besides being a real nuisance, some blunders actually make it difficult to decipher clearly the intended meaning. Also, "BJS" (p. 155) does not appear in the list of abbreviations at the front of the book. Nor does "CD" (pp. 137f, p. 142), the Damascus Document.

Davies has written an impressive study, one which challenges numerous scholarly tenets and assumptions. His positive proposals merit consideration by the scholarly community. In spite of the distracting typographical and grammatical errors, this book deserves to be read.

—JASON J. YODER
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, VIRGINIA

The Pre-Christian Paul. By Martin Hengel, in collaboration with Roland Deines. Translated by John Bowden. SCM Press and Trinity Press International, 1991, 162 pages.

Martin Hengel, professor emeritus of New Testament and Early Judaism at the University of Tübingen, offers with this book what he calls another "brick" in his construction of a history of early Christianity that intentionally seeks to correct the one developed by the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (p. ix). The notes are largely the work of Roland Deines, the collaborator. John Bowden has again offered a clear and pleasant translation.

Hengel's basic thesis is that Paul—though thoroughly steeped in the Hellenistic culture of his day—was a Jew through

and through. Nevertheless, Paul was a Jew who cannot be understood and interpreted other than through the lens of Christianity. Thus the title of the book is not *The Jewish Paul*, but *The Pre-Christian Paul*, in which Paul's identity is cast in terms of a Christian reference point.

The book has five chapters, the first of which deals with Paul's familial origin and citizenship (pp. 1–17). Paul's family is depicted as having moved to Tarsus only a generation or two before Paul's upbringing in this relatively cosmopolitan city. Hengel argues that Paul's forebears were probably slaves who received Roman (and Tarsian) citizenship upon being freed. Thus the thorny issue of Paul's citizenship is decided in the affirmative in contrast to some recent studies (such as Klaus Wengst's *Pax Romana*). Hengel accepts the testimony that Paul was a "tent-maker," but insists this does not place his family origins among the proletariat, for there is too much evidence that he was at least of the "'petty-bourgeois' middle class" (p. 17).

The second chapter (pp. 18–39) gives specific attention to Paul's formal education. In Hengel's logic, one determination of the extent of Paul's Greek versus Pharisaic influence may be found in the amount of time spent studying in Cilicia as opposed to Jerusalem. It appears, however, that Paul spent substantial time in both settings, producing a man who was consummately multi-cultural. Examining Acts 22:3 and 26:4-5, as well as hints in Paul's own epistles, Hengel concludes it is likely that "Paul returned to Jerusalem as an adolescent" (p. 38), though more specific determinations of date and motive for the move remain illusive.

Chapter three (pp. 40–53) moves the discussion away from a direct examination of Pauline biography to a contextual overview of the character of Pharisaism and the study of the law before 70 C.E. Hengel focuses on Paul again in a subsection on the relationship between his theology and rabbinic literature. Although a work of this length cannot attempt to displace Strack and Billerbeck, Lightfoot, or Sanders, Hengel does consider their

overall conclusions. In particular, he finds that modern scholars have been hasty in dismissing Strack and Billerbeck, losing sight of the riches available in their compilation (whatever the concurrent foibles).

The fourth chapter on Hellenistic synagogue education (pp. 54–62) continues the contextual analysis and recalls Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism.* He points out that the rhetoric found in Hellenistic synagogue schools differed from the literary style of specifically Greek schools, and that this difference may well explain part of the conflict Paul later had with the "Hellenists" in the emerging Christian community.

The final chapter (pp. 63–86) returns the focus to Paul, examining his role in early adulthood as a "persecutor" of opponents. Hengel sorts out problems of chronology and motive in such issues as the account of Stephen and the meaning of πορθεῖν that arise from comparing Luke's account with Paul's own descriptions. In Hengel's reconstruction, Paul "played only a subsidiary role" in the stoning of Stephen (p. 85), but took a more active leadership role in the continued persecution of the "Hellenistic" element within synagogues in Jerusalem and beyond. The trip to Damascus, of course, takes the story to the point where it can no longer be called "pre-Christian" and signals an end to this investigation.

A few points of critique might be offered. The book inevitably moves into the relationship of the writings of Paul and Luke, and the historical trustworthiness of the latter. There is some distinction between Hengel's work and that of F. F. Bruce, I. H. Marshall, and C. Hemer in the rehabilitation of Luke as a source of historical veracity. G. Lüdemann's recent redactional commentary on Acts is a closer partner. Both Germans are sensitive to Luke's limitations, but Hengel's sarcastic attitude toward those who do not share his trust of Luke "as long as there are no serious objections to him" (p. 20; cf. p. x) presents an unnecessary stumbling block.

This work is a valuable contribution to New Testament history—specifically to Pauline biography. But Hengel wants it to be

seen as a contribution to Pauline theology, reestablishing the centrality of the doctrine of justification by demonstrating that issues of law and grace consumed Paul even before his conversion (e.g., pp. x–xii). J. C. Beker has reminded us that contingency and coherency were too strictly bifurcated in the past, but the use of doctrinal assertions to establish biographical particulars remains problematic. Some years ago Eric Hoffer demonstrated with his work, *The True Believer*, that converts may have remarkable zeal for a new way of life, but do not necessarily offer the most judicious assessment of the old.

A note on the prehistory of a book about prehistory is in order: a briefer German version of the work, as presented to a Schlatter symposium, was published in *Theologische Beiträge* 21 (1990), pp. 174–198. It was published with expanded notes as "Der vorchristliche Paulus" in *Paulus und das antike Judentum*, ed. Martin Hengel and Ulrich Heckel [WUNT, 58] (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), pp. 177–294. The latter citation may be useful, since the SCM/Trinity Press volume misidentifies the source title as *Paulus, Missionar und Theologe und das antike Judentum*, though this may have been a prepublication title.

Both the initial and expanded German editions utilize footnotes rather than the endnotes of the SCM/TPI production. Presumably the SCM/TPI formatting decision was made to cut costs, but the English language publishers are still to be censured: the exhaustive bibliographic citations and detailed discussion in the 336 Hengel/Deines notes make them requisite reading (pp. 97–146), and constant cross-referencing quickly establishes a false economy. A list of abbreviations, and indices of biblical references and modern scholars follow the notes. Additional indices of general subject and extra-canonical references would have been useful.

This work will be an essential resource in Pauline studies for many years. Hengel is constantly distinguishing between the possible and the probable. Other interpreters of Paul may think some determinations slip into speculation, but it will prove impossible

to ignore Hengel's conclusions in future work. Scholars in the field will make the most use of this book, but historically detailed presentations also traditionally capture the interest of some students, pastors, and lay readers.

—RAYMOND H. REIMER
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies. Edited by Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore. Fortress Press, 1992, 176 pages.

Biblical scholars are increasingly borrowing methodologies, theories, and models from philosophy, literary theory, communication theory, women's studies, sociology, and anthropology. This collection of essays grows out of the "Biblical Criticism and Literary Criticism Section" at the 1991 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. It presents to students and teachers introductory overviews of the new approaches in Gospel research, using Mark as a case study.

The book does not provide a step-by-step outline for exegesis using the various criticisms, nor does it attempt to evaluate thoroughly the theoretical debates raging within the disciplines. Rather, *Mark and Method* surveys five (newer) criticisms and discusses key concepts, terminology, and the questions each critical enterprise raises of the text. Each of the authors uses the theoretical material as a guide in reading Markan texts. Each chapter contains a bibliography in both general theoretical literature and biblical interpretation. A glossary appears at the end of the text.

Elizabeth Struthers Malbon's chapter presents and defines foundational literary concepts, using Seymour Chatman's classic distinction between story and discourse: implied author, narrator, narratee, implied reader, characters, settings, plot, and rhetoric. Narrative criticism represents a "paradigm shift" from historical to literary questions. The narrative critic gives undivided attention to the text, analyzing the function and interaction of the narrative

elements and asking, *how* does this text mean? In contrast, traditional historical criticism asks *what* the text meant in its original context. The key factor in this paradigm shift is narrative criticism's emphasis on the *how*: *how* do these narrative elements converge to create meaning?

The controlling question in Robert M. Fowler's chapter on reader-response criticism is, "*Who* determines the meaning of a text?" The answer is unquestionably, "The reader." Fowler argues that meaning is not a property embedded in the text by the author. Instead, meaning is "the dynamic, ever-changing creation of the reader in the act of reading" (p. 51). Fowler draws upon metaphors from literary theory—looking forward, looking back, and gaps (Wolfgang Iser), reconstruction (Wayne Booth), the self-consuming artifact (Stanley Fish), and the resisting reader (Judith Fetterley)—to demonstrate what happens in the reading experience and how meaning is created.

Although well-written, Moore's chapter on deconstructive criticism is, as the preface forecasts, the most difficult of the book. Because deconstruction eludes precise definition, Moore offers a series of apothegms taken from philosophers Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida—apothegms which shape his reading of Mark. Moore labels deconstruction "a highly flexible strategy of reading" which "reads with an eye and ear extended for the excluded, the marginal, the blind spot, the blank" (pp. 85–86).

Both Fowler and Moore argue that their methodologies allow for fresh and inventive readings of difficult texts. Both authors are drawn separately to the same set of Markan texts: the parable theory (4:10-13), the naked youth running through Gethsemane (14:51-52), and the ending of the Gospel (16:1-8). However, these two authors avoided another difficult Markan text, the apocalyptic discourse (chap. 13). One wonders if their silence indicates their consent to an historical-critical reading of that text.

Feminist biblical criticism, Janice Capel Anderson argues, includes both a feminist critique and a feminist reconstruction. The former critiques the androcentric and patriarchal character of

the Bible and its scholarship, while the latter can be multifaceted. It can recover female images of God, concentrate on stories of women, reconstruct the historical and social background of the text with reference to gender, or ask how readers' responses contribute to the meaning of the text.

Anderson's style is more personal than those of the other essays. She discusses her own social location and applauds the wide diversity of feminist interpreters, claiming that "together we form intertwining strands of pearls, pearls of great price" (p. 105). In addition, Anderson enthusiastically invites others to participate in feminist biblical criticism, a field she characterizes as "exciting ... new and open to experiment" (p. 115).

In a particularly strong reading which is attentive to social and symbolic constructions of gender, Anderson engages in "feminist reader-response criticism" of "the dancing daughter" in Mark 6:14-29. Anderson exposes how this fertile story—which has provoked countless interpretations in the form of paintings, sculptures, stained-glass windows, illuminations, engravings, poems, plays, novels, operas, and other art forms—embodies a male construction of female gender.

The four methods discussed above are part of a paradigm shift far greater than that enunciated by Malbon. The epistemic shift from modernism to post-modernism spans the various social science disciplines, posing direct challenges to traditional ways of thinking. In literary theory, the importance of the author is diminished and the significance of the text and reader is amplified. The notion that reading itself is an exercise in the creation of meaning necessarily involves an important redefinition of the text. Meaning is no longer viewed as a property of an objective text deposited by an author. Biblical scholars trained in more traditional methods of interpretation (i.e., historical criticism)—methods which maintain that an author's intentions are recoverable through scientific modes of inquiry—will have a difficult time accepting the premises of these newer ways of thinking about texts and meaning.

A fifth criticism has its starting point in the assumption that "the New Testament is a profoundly social document" (p. 135). David Rhodes argues that each writing was deeply embedded in particular social, historical, and cultural circumstances. Because our circumstances today are incomparably different from those of the first-century Mediterranean world, Rhodes describes four interdependent and overlapping approaches that are being used to access the social world of the New Testament and to understand the Gospel as a first-century reader or auditor might: (1) social description; (2) social history; (3) the sociology of knowledge; and (4) the use of models from cultural anthropology.

Rhodes uses these methodologies to analyze purity and boundaries—the clean and the unclean—in Mark. In a careful reading which illumines the social phenomenon of purity and pollution in first-century Israel, Rhodes concludes that the Jewish Jesus movement, as depicted by Mark, treated the traditional cosmological, bodily, and social boundaries as lines to cross, redraw, or eliminate in the kingdom of God.

These five approaches offer the biblical interpreter exciting new ways of reading and understanding the biblical text. The approaches share an interest in the philosophical twin questions of *where* and *how* meaning occurs. Whether in the interplay between the narrative elements, between the reader (and his or her community) and the text, or between the text and its social-historical milieu, each of the five authors carefully argues his or her position. The methods are flexible and can be used in combination with or to the exclusion of one another. Each of these readings of Mark sheds new light on the text, aptly demonstrating the exegetical payoff of the various approaches.

This collection of essays provides a sound basis for understanding the types of questions each approach asks of the text and whets the appetite of the interpreter to ask similar sorts of questions.

—CHERYL A. WUENSCH
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Humanization and the Politics of God: The Koinonia Ethics of Paul Lehmann. By Nancy J. Duff. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1992, 188 pages.

Our lives are often complex at least and messy at most. No decision is as clear-cut as we may wish because people we love, people we disagree with, difficult circumstances, time limits, and much else all complicate the decision-making process. In her book, *Humanization and the Politics of God*, Dr. Nancy Duff does the reader two enormous constructive favors. By analyzing and evaluating the theological ethics of Paul Lehmann, she provides an inroad into the work of an ethicist whose thought is potent, profound, relevant, and terribly complex. Second, she provides all students of ethics—both beginning and advanced—with a general textbook in Christian contextual ethics.

Anyone who tackles Paul Lehmann's writings takes on a demanding and rewarding challenge. Duff frankly observes that "the expository task" of defining Lehmann's terms is "particularly necessary in light of the frequent complaint that Lehmann's writing is difficult to understand" (p. 3). This complaint is targeted both at his literary style and his argumentation. Those who have the advantage of reading Duff's book before reading Lehmann's work will find that Duff's analysis makes Lehmann easier to understand and more accessible, for she does an excellent job of explaining both the ambiguous terms he employs and the complex, intricate dance of his argument.

Duff clearly explains that "the purpose of this book is to explore and evaluate the implications of Lehmann's conviction that Christian ethical activity is defined from the perspective of the activity of God" (p. 3). She uses two major concepts to present the theological ethics of Paul Lehmann: humanization and the politics of God.

As the title indicates, "humanization" and "the politics of God" are two of the more significant concepts in Lehmann's ethic. Duff explains that Lehmann finds in the etymology of the

word *ethics* ideas that resonate with the Christian doctrines of God and of creation. That is, "ethics" is what holds human life together. It is what Scripture and the Christian tradition require "to make and to keep human life human" when humanity is understood as created by God. Moreover, Duff points out that in Lehmann's understanding, God's creation of humanity is an active and loving one. Having created us and entered into relationship with us, God seeks to preserve and protect that human freedom to be who we are—creatures of God.

However, besides being creatures, human beings are sinners who encroach on the freedom of others to be who they are. In this way, each of us participates daily in dehumanization. Only God can humanize, for only God is the creator and only God calls that original relationship into being. For us to usurp that place is to play at being a god. "God's action toward us liberates us, enabling us to act like human beings, *not* like gods" (p. 173, emphasis in the original). In fact, "the politics of God" is precisely that action of humanization: making and keeping human life human. This is the cornerstone of Lehmann's thought: that only God can effect humanization. True ethical activity is God's activity.

Does this mean that we are not or cannot be ethical actors? Or that we do not have ethical responsibility? The answer is a resounding "No." By analyzing Lehmann's theological foundations, his correction of and movement beyond liberalism, Duff highlights his holding together of the doctrines of creation and redemption. "A close connection between these two doctrines shapes Lehmann's theological and ethical method, a method also shaped by his interpretation of Calvin's understanding of the relationship between knowledge of God and knowledge of humanity" (p. 85). Lehmann's doctrine of creation also emphasizes that true humanity is tied to God being who God is.

By emphasizing this cornerstone of Lehmann's thought, that true ethical activity is God's activity, Duff makes a clear inroad into the lush wilderness of Lehmann's thought. Questions about Lehmann's methodology are answered by Duff in the key con-

cepts she brings into play. Are humans ethical actors? Yes, as creatures of God, we act parabolically to point humanity toward the One who works in and among us to humanize us all. Are we responsible for humanization? Absolutely: Christ's lordship over all calls us to be the humans we were created to be, and it calls us as believers to image that freedom for all humanity.

This book is finely written and solidly constructed. One qualification and one question remain. First, although Duff accurately analyzes and presents Lehmann's difficult writing, one doubts whether the depths of his meaning can be transmitted by organized delineation simply because they are untranslatable into another construct. Although the basic sense of Lehmann's thought is accessible, his style of writing, with its digressions, tangents, and poetic movement, creates the context in which his thought has its most complete meaning. Duff would agree that this book cannot substitute for reading the primary sources.

Second: where is Duff? She does an excellent job in carrying out her self-assigned task. The book is thus a useful and needed tool. But what does she herself think? Has Lehmann said it all for her? One might argue that a book written on someone else's thought renders this question irrelevant. But what prodded her to do this work? Why did she think it significant? We hear clarity in her analysis; we also hear conviction of its worth, truth, and relevance. The fact that she has understood it so well and communicated it so powerfully leaves us looking for her own creative and constructive use of Lehmann's thought.

Duff's book is indispensable for anyone studying Lehmann or contextual ethics. Her book is well-argued and clearly written. It will serve well as a resource for students of theology, contextual ethics, story, and apocalyptic thought. It is a superb entrée into the study of Lehmann's powerful and timely ethic, and a strong, convincing voice in the field of theological ethics.

—MICHELLE J. BARTEL
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Mimetic Reflections: A Study in Hermeneutics, Theology, and Ethics. By William Schweiker. Fordham University Press, 1990, 267 pages.

The task of this book is to reconstruct the concept of mimesis by bringing together in a single model the mimetic strategies of three postmodern thinkers: Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and Søren Kierkegaard. Mimesis has to do with the imitation or representation of reality in art, literature, and philosophy. The problem this book addresses is the breakdown of classical and modern forms of mimesis and the implications this has for theological and ethical discourse.

In both classical Greek metaphysics and the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, a kind of "logic of imitation" undergirded much religious and ethical discourse. Human identity was defined in relation to a transcendent reality or realities (e.g., the *imago Dei* or Platonic ideals). Such realities were reflected in the world. Texts and symbols enabled human beings to imitate or appropriate this transcendence as a guide for living. Hence, the importance, for example, of the *imitatio Dei* in Judaism and Christianity.

The subjective turn of modernity questioned whether human beings could have certain knowledge of these metaphysical realities and whether many of these realities were not, in fact, socially and historically created. Nevertheless, even modernity seemed to operate with a kind of imitative logic, merely shifting the measure for truth away from the external ideal to the transcendental unity of the self and its expressive genius. This phenomenon can be noted, for example, in Kant's critical philosophy or Romanticism.

The linguistic turn of postmodernity has deconstructed this transcendentally free self, pointing out its dependence on the givens of language, history, and social reality. The question then arises: What does it mean to speak theologically and ethically when we (1) are aware of the ways in which we as humans shape our world, our texts, and our selves—with all their fallibility, finitude, and potential for distortion—and yet (2) have also escaped

the illusion that we are, as William Schweiker puts it, "the measure of the good, sovereigns of time, and masters of life" (p. 243)?

In order to grapple with this question, Schweiker turns, via Gadamer, to the original roots of mimesis, before its appropriation by classical philosophy, in cultic ritual and mime. By taking as his ontological clue the notion of *Spiel*, a dance and social festival, Gadamer enables us to see how the mimetic act of *interpretation* creates social, linguistic, and historical *worlds* which are, in fact, the locus in which ontological realities—e.g., the being of the human or even Being itself—are rendered intelligible, even though they are not fully grasped. Ricoeur demonstrates how the mimetic act of *narration*, which enables the forging of individual and collective identity in the practical tasks of living as human beings, configures *time* as meaningful. Kierkegaard's rethinking of the *imitatio Christi* provides a means for describing how the very meaning of being human, of the self's passion for life, is figured or actualized in the *existential imitation* (again a mimetic act) of our responses to others (for Kierkegaard, an Other) in time.

In Schweiker's view, each of the above thinkers describes different dimensions of mimetic practice: the capacity (1) to generate and interpret linguistic worlds in the act of interpretation (Gadamer); (2) to configure our temporal experience as meaningful through narration (Ricoeur); and (3) to structure and transform human agency (Kierkegaard). Schweiker then brings these different dimensions together in a single understanding of mimetic practice as the way in which "the being of something becomes meaningfully presented and deferred in a figurative way while allowing a transformative appropriation of it by structuring experience" (p. 206).

Although he presents a complex model of mimetic practice with over twenty-seven dimensions, Schweiker's interests in mimesis are not merely aesthetic or formal. What he is attempting to do in this book is perhaps best understood in relation to what H.

Richard Niebuhr attempted a generation ago: to provide a way of thinking and acting theologically that is realistically responsive to God and other human beings.

Writing in 1990, Schweiker is perhaps even more poignantly conscious of how we as humans are involved in shaping our religious and ethical ideals—and how these images are not only fallible, but at times distorted and even oppressive. On the one hand, he accepts the criticisms of classical and modern forms of mimesis. He assumes that theologians face a twofold crisis in their interpretation of religious discourse: a cognitive crisis regarding its truth and meaningfulness and a practical crisis regarding its existential, ethical, and political relevance or viability. On the other hand, he does not want to reject completely the task of mimesis. In contrast to Jacques Derrida and René Girard—two postmodern thinkers, both of whom have sought to "uncover" what lies hidden in mimesis—Schweiker argues that mimesis does not merely undo its own significations (Derrida), nor does it function merely to conceal social mechanisms of domination (Girard). Rather, Schweiker contends that mimesis provides us with a fruitful means for responding to God and the *imago Dei* within us.

As a proposal for theological reflection, this reconstruction of mimesis has two distinctive features. First, it takes seriously the task of interpreting the narratives and symbols of particular religious traditions. Unlike many narrative theologies that have been proposed recently, however, it approaches this task in relation to the whole complex of social and natural "worlds" in which we, as Schweiker quotes, "live and move and have our being" (p. 229)—not merely the religious. Second, it defines the theological task to be primarily practical and not merely intellectual, since it is precisely in the existential and political acts of interpreting, narrating, and being transformed by religious narratives and symbols that their truth and meaning is enacted.

Although the book is written in an abstract style, the model it presents is not merely a theoretical one, but a highly practical

way of thinking and acting. And although this study focuses on methodological issues—proposing a theology or an ethic forms the limits of this work—the book's very reconstruction of mimesis implies an intrinsic link between content and form. In sum, this book is not merely the theoretical or methodological reworking of an aesthetic construct. Rather, its reconstruction of mimesis provides an elegant means for rethinking religious and moral discourse, now that the grand mimetic vision of onto-theology has been deconstructed.

—LOIS MALCOLM
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Faith, Power, and Politics: Political Ministry in Mainline Churches. By Audrey R. Chapman. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1991, 209 pages.

Until 1991, Audrey R. Chapman was World Issues Secretary for the United Church Board for World Ministries. *Faith, Power, and Politics* was written during this appointment and is directed towards institutions and agencies of mainline churches. That the book appeared just as Chapman became the director of the Science and Human Rights Program at the American Association for the Advancement of Science is no mere accident: "This book is an outgrowth of both my commitment to and disappointment with the mainline churches .... It is my hope that this study may be more successful in stimulating some kind of meaningful reevaluation and revisions of mainline political ministries than I was able to achieve during my ten-year tenure with the church" (p. xiv).

Chapman's insightful analysis of the diverse political ministries with which the mainline churches in the United States were involved over the last twenty to thirty years shows her familiarity with the subject. The book is organized into five chapters. It is especially strong in the two middle chapters (three and four), where Chapman demonstrates her expertise in analyzing the context of the political ministry of mainline churches.

In these chapters, she moves from the "social and historical context," which ranges from the constitution to the post-Vietnam era, to the "church context," which includes seven characteristics of advocacy and social ministries (pp. 102–112). Finally, she addresses the "changing context" of political ministries, which is characterized both by the "disestablishment of the mainline churches" in the United States and by an increased global awareness, especially in the areas of ecology and economic justice (pp. 114–124). Chapman analyzes documents, resolutions, and statements from mainline denominations, including Roman Catholic pastorals. She combines this analysis with sociological data from various surveys on the faith, involvement, and attitudes of members and pastors of these denominations. She also discusses the rise of evangelical churches. The data is supplemented by references to the sociological theories of Bellah, Reichley, Wuthnow, and others. Such comprehensive and knowledgeable discussion of political ministry is rare.

This review begins with a discussion of the middle chapters of the book because it is here that Chapman states her thesis about the inefficiency of the current political ministries. The following statements clearly show the frustration cited above: "Mainline political ministries ... at times border on formulating policy statements as an end in itself" (p. 92); and: "Few of the churches, Catholic or Protestant, have mounted serious efforts to disseminate and implement the pastorals. Far more time, energy, and attention was vested in the writing process" (p. 147). The historical, biblical, and theological reflections of chapters one and two, along with the sweeping ecclesiological proposals of chapter five, lead to this thesis or are developed from it.

The concise overview of the history of the political involvement and ministries of mainline Protestant denominations in the United States in chapter one provides an excellent introduction. Throughout her book, but especially in chapter two, Chapman draws on classic liberation theologians (Gutiérrez, Bonino, Boff, Villa-Vicencio, and especially Sobrino) and feminist theologians

(Russell, Ruether, Fiorenza, Heyward, Chopp, and rather extensively, McFague, pp. 57–59, *et passim*). Seminary students who sometimes doubt the relevance of these authors for their future work "out in the church" might be dissuaded from their suspicions by such wide reading and appropriation in a book written by a church official.

The book's commitment to the bible may be a striking surprise for conservative Christians and evangelicals who would decry the book's political positions on peace, economic and racial justice, and ecology. The bibliography contains an unusually high proportion of exegetical literature. Chapman uses biblical references to establish her thesis and gives bible study a significant part in her prescribed cure to overcome present crises and to build the church—the community that Jesus called and which is faithful to his teaching in its ministry.

The last statement is an oversimplified summary of Chapman's complex discussion, but it serves to introduce what I find disturbing about the book. Some will criticize Chapman for establishing a "left canon" against the existing "canonical" texts used by conservatives in political discussion. Others will criticize the fact that most references are to the New Testament, suggesting a stronger rupture in the call for peace and justice between the two biblical testaments than is justified. After all, Chapman is discussing the Christian church. At the same time, however, Chapman occasionally worries that scripture "selectively interpreted through Reformation lenses" (p. 35; cf. p. 39) might also be part of the problem. Historically, the alternative model of the church has been a sacramental understanding, which is the background of the Roman Catholic pastorals as well as of many of the liberation and some of the feminist authors—however critical they are toward the institutionalized, hierarchical, and disciplinary expressions of Roman Catholic ecclesiology! There is only a passing reference (p. 134) to a major ecumenical document on ecclesiology.

It is ironic how the very authors who developed the notion of "contextual theology" are used as models for quite a different

context! The concept of "mainline churches"—which here includes Roman Catholic and Mennonite churches as well as those commonly associated with the expression—does not acknowledge particularities in confessional terms or even social location. The sociological data Chapman presents show that church members perceive denominational differences mostly in terms of variations of worship, but the absence of the two largest African-American denominations from the book's index raises questions: Where is their voice and concern for racial, economic, and social justice? What would they have to say about the analysis of political ministry and the proposal to change the church in the direction of a community and task force? What is their role in "the activity of the community to convert and transform the world in the direction of the kingdom" (p. xv)?

Provocative and well-written, this book will spark intense discussion in any church polity class. Members of the academy are often called upon to draft theological documents or statements regarding public policy, or to serve as delegates to the various bodies of their denominations. Many are active in local congregations. The controversial theses of *Faith, Power, and Politics* are a welcome challenge to reflect on the ecclesiological and ethical implications of such involvement.

—REINHILDE RUPRECHT
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Cut Loose Your Stammering Tongue: Black Theology in the Slave Narratives. Edited by Dwight N. Hopkins and George Cummings. Orbis Books, 1991, 168 pages.

> I was settin' here thinking the other night 'bout the talk of them kind of whitefolks going to Heaven. Lord God, they'd turn the Heaven wrong side out and have the angels working to make something they could take away from

> them. I can say these things now. I'd say them anywhere—in the courthouse—before the judges, before God.
>
> —Jack Maddox (former slave)

During 1936–1938, writers from the Federal Writer's Project interviewed hundreds of former slaves. George P. Rawick's forty-one volume *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* is the major collection of these narratives. The narratives are filled with religious practice, history, and conviction. Now four younger theologians (Dwight N. Hopkins, George C. L. Cummings, Will Coleman, and Cheryl J. Sanders) apply different methods in *Cut Loose Your Stammering Tongue* to explore this material as a source for contemporary African-American liberation theology and ethics.

Dwight N. Hopkins' article, "Slave Theology in the Invisible Institution," uses a cultural-historical method. He proposes that slave theology emerged from a church whose earliest—indeed only—experience with the world was enslavement. Coupled with slavery are two other factors. First, while slaves often adopted Christianity freely, slave owners just as often forced belief upon them. Second, new converts retained *some* traditional African religious ideals, beliefs, and practices. As a result, the African American church developed a theology in which the motifs of liberation and political resistance shaped views of God, Jesus, and humanity. For many, the Exodus event formed a theology of survival; Jesus' resurrection formed a theology of freedom; and an unqualified belief in human dignity formed a theological anthropology.

George C. L. Cummings' essay, "The Slave Narratives as a Source of Black Theological Discourse: The Spirit and Eschatology," uses a different method for explicating the theology of the slave narratives. "Determining the values, symbols, and images of the black experience that will empower the contemporary black liberation struggle," he says, requires that one consider as basic the received traditions and experiences of the spirit and eschatology (p. 46). Thus, when "the Spirit" appears in the texts as one

whose presence aids in conversion, as an interpreter of visions and dreams of freedom, and as a provider of reassurance of autonomy and independence in the midst of oppression, Cummings suggests that slave theology assembled around a force more powerful than enslavement. These convictions—coupled with an eschatology stressing a deep concern with powerlessness, hope, and expectant optimism—show that slave theology reaches over the constraints of history.

In "Coming Through 'Ligion," Will Coleman aims to understand conversion in the narratives. Since the symbols, images, and metaphors of traditional African religion are often recounted when former slaves narrate their conversion, he uses the hermeneutical methodology of Paul Ricoeur to unfold the world of the narratives. By looking at language and its use in the conversion narratives, Coleman suggests that metaphorical expressions provide a basis for our own constructive theological task. The multitude of metaphors awaiting study presents exciting possibilities for future work and one may turn to Coleman to see the many facets of the project.

Part of African-American liberation theology's constructive task is to use the narratives as source material for ethics. Cheryl J. Sanders' "Liberation Ethics in the Ex-Slave Interviews" begins this by using a paradigm developed by Ralph Potter (in *War and Moral Discourse*) as an interpretive tool for understanding the different ethical statements made by four former slaves. Following Potter's interpretive guide, she looks for various patterns of empirical definitions, affirmations of loyalty, and beliefs. Using Steven Tipton's *Getting Saved in the Sixties: Moral Meaning in Conversion and Cultural Change* to build upon Potter, Sanders shows that in her selections, slaves fashioned ethics toward one of four orientations: (1) an authoritative moral source; (2) rules and principles known by reason; (3) consequences known by cost-benefit; or (4) an orientation toward personal feelings and intuition. Sanders' research reveals the complexity of slave theology. For example, while some slaves were ambivalent toward their oppres-

sors or nostalgic for the past, at no point do any of the narratives invoke Christian ethics to defend slavery.

Cummings writes the final essay, "Slave Narratives, Black Theology of Liberation (USA), and the Future," in which he brings together insights and themes garnered by the preceding essays. He proposes that the narratives will advance the construction of black theology when a diversity of disciplines are brought into play, when the narratives are compared to other literary and homiletical material from the African-American tradition, and when new work considers the relationship between biography and worship.

This well-written collection of essays promises a bright future for black theology. Its value is threefold. First, it challenges the assumption that black theology is a recent notion without deep historical roots, nuance, or critical reflection. The slave narratives make clear that while "liberation theology" is a new term, African-American theology has for two hundred years proposed the liberating God and the suffering Christ as theological norms for the African-American community. Second, these essays provoke the adherents of African-American liberation theology to acknowledge the diversity of witnesses to liberation, including some which may be "more or less Christian" (p. 141). Third, these essays make us realize the power of a received oral tradition to awake, enliven, and inspire.

Christian theology done from the perspective of the earliest African-Americans was powerful because it relied almost exclusively on community, memory, and imagination. The authors of the narratives would welcome—as the academic community should—this attempt to give voice to their hopes again.

—ARTHUR SUTHERLAND
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Luther and Liberation: A Latin American Perspective. By Walter Altmann. Translated by Mary M. Solberg. Fortress Press, 1992, 148 pages.

The complacency of Lutherans in Nazi Germany has led many to reject Lutheran ethics. For such persons, Walter Altmann's *Luther and Liberation: A Latin American Perspective* may come as a surprise. As the title suggests, the book attempts to show how Luther's thought supports the theologies of liberation in Latin America. The author claims a personal interest in reconciling Luther and liberation theology, based on his own Lutheran heritage and his alliance with liberation movements as a theologian at the Escola Superior de Teología in Brazil. While his reading of Luther as favorable to liberation is interesting, he misrepresents the Reformer's theology and ignores significant aspects of his work.

Altmann's method is to assess Luther's impact in his time and in ours, and to consider the "context" of each. Altmann believes that Luther's vision of society was too hierarchical and too individualistic. As a result, it is often irrelevant to the realities of modern politics and economics. In particular, the author holds that Luther's attack against clerical tyranny is unrelated to the current situation in Latin America where political, economic, and social oppression are a more serious danger.

Despite such criticism, Altmann regards many of Luther's reflections as particularly relevant to Latin America. Luther's Christology is a major interest to the author, since Luther preceded the "historical Jesus" movement, which distinguished between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history. This distinction in Latin America has taken the form of a "dead Jesus," with which the poor identify, and a "celestial monarch," who rules over earthly powers. Altmann holds that the holism of Luther's Jesus and his understanding of the atonement is particularly relevant to liberating movements, since Luther saw Christ's death and resurrection as a combative victory over socio-political tyranny.

Altmann faults most Lutherans for ignoring the combative and liberating elements of Christology, arguing that they lost these ideas when territorial churches were organized under the control of Reformed princes. The churches, he says, were "domesticated" and made more conservative under political control.

The author also relates Luther's doctrine of justification and understanding of conversion to liberation theologies. Here his argument becomes less persuasive. Altmann's distinction between conversion and justification is troubling. Conversion is upheld as a human action which fuses love of God and love of neighbor. Altmann's discussion of conversion in these terms hints at a fusion of human action and grace, a fusion foreign to Luther's thought.

Interestingly, Altmann does not consider Luther's treatise, "Two Kinds of Righteousness" (1519), among his many references. The author claims that Latin American liberation-minded Christians interpret justification as "liberation." The question is, "liberation" from what? Consideration of "Two Kinds of Righteousness" would have forced Altmann to distinguish between the "alien righteousness" of Jesus Christ and the "proper righteousness" of the world. Luther considered "alien righteousness" to be freedom from sin and distinct from any earthly righteousness. Altmann claims two different liberating roles for justification: rejection of the church as a form of domination and "radicalized respect for human dignity." Altmann thus muddies Luther's own distinction between the two kinds of righteousness. Specifically, he expands the doctrine of justification so that it has implications beyond the forgiveness of sins. Such an explanation raises questions about the place of "sanctification" in Christian life and appears to make the author, unlike Luther, an advocate of a third use of the law.

This expansion is also evident in the author's discussions of ecclesiology and the "two kingdoms" doctrine. Altmann considers the Christian base communities to be a new ecclesiastical model—a position that contrasts with Luther's definition of the church as the congregation of believers and the Word of God. Altmann sees

base communities not just as churches, but as centers of communal life and democracy. Within the two kingdoms framework, the church must "confront the political authorities with God's will," always asking whether institutions serve the "old reality" of sin or the "new reality" of the coming kingdom of God. While the author does not want to put the church in a position of power over the state, he nevertheless does this implicitly by asserting that Christians are morally superior to others. The implication is that the righteousness given by God provides Christians with special insight in governing—an insight the remainder of humanity does not possess. While it is true that Luther considered it the responsibility of the church and Christians to speak against injustice, this is a responsibility shared by all humanity, since all have a knowledge of justice through natural law. This is a claim Luther makes in "Temporal Authority" (1523), another document the author does not consider. Altmann later asserts that the church in Latin America must give up its dominance in dissent, but it unclear whether this is a theological consideration or a political one.

The two final chapters consider Luther's writings that relate to five specific issues in Latin America today. They also appraise the reformer's enduring legacy. In his consideration of politics, education, the economy, war, and violence, Altmann continues the pattern of discussing Luther's context and then relating it to his own, quoting long passages of Luther's works in the process. In most of these areas, the author considers Luther to be progressive for his time, but not sufficiently "reformed" for today. Altmann's general criticism remains that Luther's hierarchical society prevented him from endorsing the democratic solutions needed most in Latin America. The author concludes by calling the church to increased and renewed fidelity to the gospel's message of justification/liberation while constantly readjusting to changing cultural contexts; this is the author's definition of "reformation."

It is understandable that Altmann would want to reconcile liberation theology and his Lutheran heritage, but the pieces do

not always fit. The author builds his case by selecting some works while neglecting others of equal importance in Luther's corpus. Altmann's commitment to liberation has biased this work in much the same way as ideology often overwhelms theology in Latin America. Luther is not necessarily an enemy of liberation, but he is not the soulmate Altmann desires, either.

—LAKE LAMBERT
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire. By Peter Brown. University of Wisconsin Press, 1992, 182 pages.

Peter Brown, Princeton University's Rollins Professor of History, has once again shown that he is one of the few scholars in the world who can be both prolific and compellingly original at the same time.

The theme of his new book is the social history of power and persuasion in Late Antiquity. Brown shows that in the beginning of this period, old Roman elites, united by their education and armed with the power of words, warded off "the cruelty and the fiscal rigor which characterized the government of the Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D." (p. 3). The rest of the book shows how this world was transformed into a world in which the power of persuasion was transferred to the Christian church in the person of its bishops.

Brown uses vivid images to portray this transformation. A group of delegates from Sardis emerges from the praetorian prefect's presence "feeling their heads, to make sure that they were still on their shoulders" (p. 10). In Alexandria, a Christian mob, probably sent by the bishop Cyril, drags the noble pagan philosopher Hypatia from her carriage and murders her. Disgruntled populaces, gathered in the church's great basilicas, circumvent local governors by shouting out their complaints in slogans meant for the emperor's daily briefing. The pagan philosopher Proclus

mourns a lost age; his "dreams came to him from a world beyond his times: 'Echoes from the first dawn of our creation'" (p. 145).

The first chapter, "*Devotio:* Autocracy and Elites," provides the background for the changes that follow. Brown makes clear that "power ... remains the most striking characteristic of the later Roman Empire in all its regions" (p. 7). This power was concentrated at the top and center: the emperor was an absolute ruler. Yet the vast distances of the empire limited the emperor's direct power. Central power was mediated through a vast social network of local elites. Since alliances had to be formed with local notables to ensure success, the choice of these alliances was crucial. This gave considerable power to the locals, who understood the situation. They occasionally retired to the hills, leaving the governor isolated and useless in the metropolis.

Nevertheless, the governor did have real power and had to be dealt with somehow. The resulting social nexus provided a place for the "ancient magic of Greek words. Emperors and governors gave way, not because they were frequently unsure of themselves, ill-informed, or easily corrupted; rather, they had been moved by the sheer grace and wisdom of carefully composed speeches" (p. 30). A common rhetorical education held the system together.

Brown's second chapter, "*Paideia* and Power," gives the details of the system: the elites could be reasonably sure that they shared a high degree of literary culture (*paideia*) with the governors. The schools taught strict common codes of verbal and interpersonal decorum. They taught a subject how to ask graciously for mercy or relief; they taught a governor how to give way graciously, as if granting a favor to a friend. This served to mask the harsh realities of patronage and alliance and allowed the system to operate smoothly. The ideals of friendship and education were often used to avert the officially sanctioned acts of violence which became increasingly common in the later empire. Anger was treated as a breach in decorum. This allowed for a certain reversibility of decisions within a system which came increasingly to

stress such decorum. However, the elites needed not only to persuade, but also to challenge power. This function was found in the person of the philosopher, a person seemingly outside the ties of patronage and friendship. In the fourth century, the philosopher maintained the image of the counselor of emperors. The philosopher could speak where others had to be silent.

Brown's third chapter, "Poverty and Power," emerges naturally from this. It details how, "under the cover of a Christian language shot through with paradox, which seemed to threaten brutal discontinuity between the old and the new, a regrouping took place among the dominant factions in the late Roman cities" (p. 77). The bishop joined the civic notables in exercising control within the city, and the holy man or bishop took over the role of the philosopher in speaking plainly to the emperor or his representatives to win mercy for the city. Bishops became the "lovers of the poor," usurping the role of the civic notables who had supplied the whole *demos*, rich and poor, with a stream of gifts.

The church played an important role in keeping the vast masses of unemployed poor in one place, thus offering stability to the cities. Constantine's decision to give the bishop's court the authority to hear cases and make judgments was a crucial move that allowed the bishop to become a spokesperson for the lower classes. Gradually the emperors came to realize the advantages of allowing the bishops or holy men to be seen as the assuagers of the imperial wrath, instead of the nobles and philosophers. This gave added prestige and power to church leaders, who took steps to maintain the new system.

Brown's final chapter, "Towards a Christian Empire," shows that the Christian bishops, who were themselves the products of *paideia*, took on the role of the old elites. This defused the antithesis between Christianity and *paideia* and allowed the two to coexist. The transition to a Christian empire was a slow one, and a new tradition of silence about one's personal religious beliefs allowed pagans to continue within the administration as before. Nevertheless, "a groundswell of confidence that Christians

enjoyed [greater] access to the powerful spelled the end of polytheism far more effectively than did any imperial law or the closing of any temple" (p. 136). Although the old system remained at least partially in place with new elites, the bishop's use of the chanting crowds of his basilica to speak directly to the emperor is far removed from the traditional use of persuasive words and common *paideia*.

Brown's book delightfully shows one strand of the transformation of the empire from pagan to Christian and should prove of interest not only to historians of Late Antiquity, but also to Medieval historians and to those interested in the sociology of persuasion in autocratic societies.

—ALLAN C. LANE
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Islam: An Introduction. By Annemarie Schimmel. State University of New York Press, 1992, 166 pages.

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world. Its influence is increasingly felt in this country. Studies and articles abound on the presence of the Islamic faith in American society and more and more Americans have had experience with it through personal contact with Muslims and their traditions.

At the same time, however, few people have an adequate or accurate understanding of this religion. They rely heavily on media presentations and personal anecdotes that distort the reality and perpetuate misconceptions and stereotypes. The obvious way to solve this problem is for people to educate themselves about the true nature of Islam so they may more properly understand it and interpret its growing importance.

Annemarie Schimmel's book is an excellent tool for such a task and is a marvelous addition to the growing number of introductory texts on Islam. This work, from a recently retired professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages at Harvard, offers a comprehensive overview that is both succinct and packed

with information. The amount of material Schimmel is able to include in just 144 pages of text is astounding. She covers as much ground as several lengthier introductions.

According to Schimmel, the book offers a traditional view of Islamic history—as opposed to other approaches currently popular, which she identifies as sociological and political. This is not to say that sociological and political concerns are not found in her work. They are present, but they do not dominate the discussion. The result is an informative book that is enjoyable to read and covers some of the major aspects of the Islamic tradition.

The book contains 12 chapters, each of which treat a major theme in more-or-less chronological order, beginning with "Arabia before Islam" and ending with "Modern Developments within Islam." Schimmel covers such topics as the *Qur'an*, law, mysticism, and popular piety. She clearly explains key concepts and terms, which she gives in both their original Arabic form (in transliteration) and English translation. She surveys and assesses many of the important figures and movements in their proper social and historical context.

Several areas of Schimmel's work deserve special praise. She explains well the role and importance of the *ḥadīth*, the written collections of originally oral traditions that describe the attitudes and behavior of Muhammad on a wide range of topics. In the same way, she has a good feel for the development from *Qur'an* to *ḥadīth* to law as the Islamic community attempted to meet its expanding needs and as Islamic society became more complex. Schimmel also presents a coherent picture of the evolution and interrelation of the various sects found within Islam. This is often one of the more confusing and frustrating aspects of Islam, especially for beginners, but Schimmel's treatment covers a wide spectrum of the Islamic world in a way that is simple without being simplistic.

Christians will find Schimmel's book fascinating reading in several places. At several points she refers to the image and role of Jesus in Islam. For instance, she discusses the influence that

questions about Jesus' nature had on the development of Islamic dogma, particularly the connection between the idea of the eternal *logos* and the uncreated nature of the *Qur'an*. Equally interesting is the chapter on theology and philosophy, which describes debates among different Islamic factions on issues which have also been hotly contested in Christian circles, such as revelation, free will, and salvation. Several thinkers who have had profound influence on the development of western thought, such as Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), are placed in their proper cultural and intellectual contexts, giving a better sense of Christianity's indebtedness to the Islamic tradition.

A few minor adjustments in the presentation of the material would strengthen this book and make it even more useful. Occasionally one finds seemingly unrelated themes that distract from the main point being considered and that break the flow of the discussion. For instance, in the middle of a fine biographical sketch of Muhammad on page 14, Schimmel includes a short excursus on the beliefs and practices shared by all Muslims. Similar editorial decisions disturb the continuity of the chapter on the *Qur'an*. Schimmel's discussion on the architecture and layout of a mosque leads to an analysis of different types of calligraphy. This also seems out of place, since these topics are not addressed in Islam's sacred text. Furthermore, Schimmel divorces prayer from her treatment of the other four pillars of Islam (confession of faith, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage), describing it in isolation from these other practices incumbent upon all Muslims. This disturbs their unity and puts prayer in a separate category. Schimmel could have avoided these difficulties had she included a separate chapter dealing only with the ritual and practices of Islam.

Unfortunately, treatment of the Black Muslim movement is given only one paragraph. A book directed primarily toward an American audience should treat this branch of Islam in more detail, since, in many cases, it is the one with which the intended reader will have personal contact.

A final shortcoming is the lack of any visual aids in the book. A map of the Islamic world—or at least of the Hijaz area of

the Arabian peninsula, which was Islam's birthplace—would assist the reader greatly. Even more useful might be diagrams visualizing how Islam's various philosophies and sects are related. On the positive side, the book does contain a fine introductory bibliography and some helpful indexes, including one which lists and defines key concepts and technical terms.

Those looking for an introduction to Islam that is thorough and enjoyable to read should look no further. It is the finest resource of its type currently available and can serve a variety of purposes. It will be an important addition to the personal library of anyone involved in religious study. Church leaders and others who organize discussion groups will also find it an excellent resource for studying this significant faith tradition, a tradition which will continue to play a major role in American society.

—JOHN KALTNER
UPSALA COLLEGE

Meeting at the Crossroads. By Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan. Harvard University Press, 1992, 258 pages.

Continuing in the tradition of Carol Gilligan's ground-breaking and still controversial *In a Different Voice* (1982), this book is the latest publication by the Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development. This work contrasts somewhat with previous books in the series in its openly self-reflective analysis of their project and the ways it challenged the collaborators' assumptions about research methods and about themselves as women. This authorial vulnerability and openness to self-evaluation are striking and refreshing aspects of the book. The book also differs from its predecessors in its relatively smooth, narrative style. Instead of offering isolated summaries of individual research findings, the authors have effectively woven the chapters of this book around the stories of girls from a variety of ethnic and class backgrounds. The book possesses a thematic unity and flow the earlier works lack.

Meeting at the Crossroads narrates the researchers' longitudinal study from 1986 to 1990 of almost 100 girls ranging between the ages of 7 and 18 at Laurel School, a private day school for girls in Cleveland, Ohio. This study is part of the Harvard Project's ongoing empirical and theoretical study of women's psychosocial experience as articulated by women.

According to Gilligan, Brown, et al., connections and relationships are central to women's ways of knowing and being. Before the age of 12, girls' voices reflect strength, courage, and resistance in their interpersonal life. However, adolescent girls often become silent in relationships rather than risk open conflict and disagreement, fearing isolation or violence.

Sadly, by ages 12 and 13, girls measure themselves against the cultural standards of beauty and goodness, of physical and moral perfection. Selflessness and self-silencing are seen as the necessary conditions for being loved or for gaining approval. Girls find themselves caught in a painful and destructive double bind. If they remain embodied and expressive of strong feelings, they experience the loss of others' approval. Yet silencing their own voices and feelings brings about slow self-suffocation. They long for authentic relationships but now see relationships as dangerous. While the girls struggle to resist losing either self or relationships, they often take on the dichotomies of the culture which encourages them to choose *between* self-expression and caring for others.

Brown and Gilligan have found that during adolescence, most girls become confused, repressed, and disconnected from their earlier strong selves. Many of them "go underground" and dissociate from their own feelings and body, a dissociation frequently manifested in eating disorders or depression. The researchers asked whether this shift from confidence to confusion is necessary, and if not, how it can be prevented.

The 13 researchers used the interview-research method to establish mutually beneficial "resonant relationships" between women and girls and to encourage both toward greater participa-

tion in "the social construction of reality." However, they soon found that the girls experienced their interviews as invasive and controlling, feeling that no real relationships existed between themselves and the older women. The researchers realized to their chagrin that their standardized method of psychological inquiry had been appropriated from the same dominant culture they saw as "objectifying, idealizing, trivializing, and denigrating" to young women. It was breaking the connection they were striving to create with the girls. Thus, in the second year of the study, the researchers realized that they needed a different psychological method, a *practice of psychology* that was more like a *practice of relationship*. They developed a more open-ended and genuinely collaborative "Listener's Guide." In doing so, they found that their

> work gained in clarity .... Out of what could be seen as a collapse in form—a letting go of our planned research design for the messiness and unpredictability and vulnerability of ongoing relationships—a way of working emerged which felt more genuine and mutual, precarious at first, disruptive, unsettling to those of us used to our authority and control in professional situations in the conduct of psychological research. (pp. 15–16)

Brown and Gilligan assess adolescence for girls as a time of forced compromise between women's voices and a patriarchal, male-voiced culture. There is no easy way out of this destructive double bind. As most of the women administrators, teachers, and researchers involved in the study discovered, they too had been modeling the very repression of conflict and adoption of bland "niceness" they wanted the girls to resist. As they began to retrieve their preadolescent honesty and strength with the help of the girls, the adult women began in turn to support the adolescents. Brown and Gilligan close their book with a hopeful image of girls and women "dancing at the crossroads," encouraging each

other to preserve both their own strong voices *and* their cherished relationships.

Meeting at the Crossroads offers a sobering yet hopeful picture of girls' and women's development in a particular and limited context. While it does not pretend to speak for all women everywhere, it serves as a microcosm for the struggle many females face as they grow into mature adults in this culture. And it contains challenging implications for the church and seminaries as cultural and potentially counter-cultural institutions.

With its youth groups and intergenerational membership, the church provides a unique opportunity for girls and women to form the "resonant relationships" the researchers found so revitalizing for themselves and for the girls. To embrace this kind of relational opportunity, however, Christian women as well as men will need to examine ways in which they themselves and the church at large are complicit with destructive gender stereotypes which force important dimensions of the human experience underground. This volume provides a constructive and challenging companion and guide for church members, pastors, educators, and theologians willing to infuse this liberating journey with a more authentic, mutual, and God-intended relationality.

—CAROL J. COOK
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Four Codes of Preaching: Rhetorical Strategies. By John S. McClure. Fortress Press, 1991, 201 pages.

What is the best way to heal a sick sermon? According to recent preaching theorists, one cannot answer this question without first diagnosing the illness correctly and comprehensively. For the last twenty years, a significant portion of scholarly literature on preaching has taken a structuralist approach to diagnosing sermon ailments. The key participants in this movement (Eugene Lowry and David Buttrick) have not appealed directly to the classic roots of structuralism (e.g., by citing such French notables as Ferdinand

Saussure or Claude Lévi Strauss). Nevertheless, they have displayed considerable interest in methods characteristic of structuralist thinking. Each has attempted to discern and systematize the underlying laws that allegedly govern how congregation members hear a sermon. According to these preaching theorists, a structuralist analysis of human listening patterns is a requisite first step on the journey to find a cure for infirm preaching.

John McClure's new book is the most highly developed representative of the structuralist trend in homiletics to date. Although previous authors have used the methods of structuralism to ascertain the most appropriate match between the way people listen and sermon design (i.e., toward prescriptive ends), McClure's project is primarily descriptive. Drawing on categories established by such diverse thinkers as Gabriel Fackre, A. J. Gremais, Paul Ricoeur, and H. Richard Niebuhr, McClure's work adeptly synthesizes a number of critical theories. McClure then develops these theories into a highly refined structuralist grid that describes a sermon in terms of its smallest units of meaning (semes).

McClure's hope is that this grid will provide the "working preacher" with a lens that will deepen his or her understanding of the scriptural, semantic, theosymbolic, and cultural dimensions of the preaching event. These four dimensions are the "four codes" from which the title of the volume is derived. Borrowing from the early structuralist thinking of the French semiotician, Roland Barthes, McClure defines a code as "a system of signs, words, or ciphers that becomes a way of organizing a particular level or aspect of human interaction" (p. 8). McClure intends for preachers to become more aware (and critical) of the interplay of these codes in their own particular preaching styles, strategies, and situations. To these ends, Dr. McClure opts away from a purely descriptive task, dons his pharmaceutical smock, and writes out a prescription for homiletical health. He suggests that a proper balance between (1) the four interwoven semantic codes; (2) a preacher's manner of encoding; and (3) a congregation's way of listening will result in a proper sermon.

McClure devotes a chapter to the explication of each of the four codes and concludes by analyzing Edmund Steimle's acclaimed sermon, "Martha Missed Something." McClure's identification of the four interwoven codes in Steimle's sermon reveals something of his system's strengths and limitations. McClure writes that Steimle's intention in this sermon was to "negotiate a transitional/transformational style" when encoding the scriptural message for his hearers (p. 182). Those who have heard and appreciated Steimle's preaching may scratch their heads in confusion upon learning this: "Was that what Steimle was trying to do?" As is often the case with structuralist grids, their description of an event can seem quite alien to other witnesses to the event. Although McClure's grid allows us to see things from a new and often helpful perspective, it also uses categories that are foreign to both preachers and listeners. Such is the lot of structuralism. At points, McClure's grid is marvelously clarifying; at others, it seems to miss or obscure the point.

Another danger inheres in a structuralist approach to preaching. Pastors who focus on the intricacies of a structuralist method risk becoming technicians who serve a preaching system, rather than critical, practical theologians who serve God in a parish. McClure, however, intends his grid to be a tool for the practical theologian and not a homiletical idol. McClure argues that if one is conscious of the intricacies of the four codes in preparing a sermon, one will communicate better by balancing and adjusting the use of the individual codes according to the particularities of a specific worship event. McClure encourages the preacher "to think for herself and become a practical theologian of the pulpit ministry" (p. 194).

The intricacy of McClure's grid deserves a final comment. One would be hard pressed to find a homiletical textbook with a system more complex than McClure's. For the professor of preaching who specializes in minute variances in homiletical health (those slight disturbances in the endocrine balance of student sermons), this book will be of interest and importance. It

may not be helpful, however, for people who are trying to resuscitate a failed preaching approach.

On a large, white truck in northern Minnesota, a CAT-scan machine travels around to small, rural hospitals. It is an impressive piece of medical technology on eighteen wheels, but it is expensive and requires highly trained personnel. Individually, the rural hospitals could not afford to own or maintain one of these complex machines. By pooling their resources, however, they can afford to maintain this magnificent diagnostic tool in their areas. For when doctors are confused or unsure, the CAT-scanner is "the ultimate" in diagnostic technology.

John S. McClure's new book is a mobile CAT-scan machine for the homiletical world. It is a meticulous structuralist description of the inner workings of sermons. Like the CAT-scan, the book attempts to provide an accurate picture of what is going on inside. It magnifies and analyzes the internal and complex semantic codes that, when weaved together, make up a sermon. Although the book is not expensive, it is a complicated tool.

Only rarely will one need such an elaborate grid to locate the problems in ailing preaching. One doesn't call for a CAT-scan machine when a tongue depressor will do the job. Still, there are times when a highly defined instrument like McClure's grid will prove helpful precisely because of its sophistication. While it may not be the book that every pastor will want to have perched on her or his preaching shelf, it is a book that homileticians will be glad to have around.

—SCOTT BLACK JOHNSTON
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. By Thomas H. Groome. HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, 569 pages.

Two significant issues confront theologians of ministerial practices these days: the interdisciplinary context of all theology and the

relationship between theology and concrete human practices. With the publication of *Christian Religious Education* in 1980 and now of *Sharing Faith*, Thomas Groome has succeeded in thrusting religious education theory into the forefront of the most exciting emerging area of religious discourse: the point of convergence between the formal disciplines of philosophy and theology, empirical social analysis, and practical theologies on the one hand, and strategies of ministry on the other.

Sharing Faith is *the* book with which Christian educators and practical theologians will grapple in the near future for several reasons. First, it offers an educational theory that substantiates itself epistemologically. Second, the carefully worked-out epistemology is tied to ontology. Third, as an "epistemic ontology," Groome's praxis-based pedagogy transcends the artificial barriers between education and pastoral ministry in an effort to unify religious education and social transformation in a liberationist pedagogy. Fourth, Groome presents his praxis-based pedagogy as a "comprehensive" "metaapproach" for pastoral ministries.

In the few paragraphs that follow, I will set forth Groome's overall objectives in *Sharing Faith* and point to several of his theologically inadequate presuppositions. I will concentrate primarily upon his epistemological perspective and its implications for his pedagogy.

Sharing Faith elaborates the "shared praxis approach" of Groome's earlier *Christian Religious Education* by extending its epistemological infrastructure and its practical implications. In Part One, Groome traces the epistemological underpinnings of "shared praxis" to an anthropological ontology. Part Two offers a more detailed rationale for and more concrete description of the five movements of the shared praxis approach. Part Three proposes that the "shared praxis approach" serve as a model for pastoral ministry. Part Four seems to be an appendix that explains the theological dimensions of the program as a whole. That his theological creed comes at the end of his discussion of educational pedagogy is indicative, I think, of the role theology plays in his pedagogy.

Groome's critical reconstruction of the philosophy of epistemology is an attempt to convince the reader of the need for religious education to account for the "dynamics, sources, and reliability of human knowing" (p. 7). But Groome does not stop with epistemology as such; he grounds it in a Heideggerian ontology, the study of "people's whole way of 'being' as human beings in the world" (p. 7). For Groome, the crucial connection between what and how we know and what we are is self-reflective human activity; i.e., praxis. Praxis is constituted by human activity, subjectivity, and relationality. Christian religious education, according to Groome, should be true to its "incarnational principle" (p. 8) by attending to the practical nature of human beings as "agent-subjects-in-relationship" (p. 9). Religious education, then, is concerned not only with cognition, but with *conation*—"what is realized when the whole ontic being of 'agent-subjects-in-relationship' is actively engaged to consciously know, desire, and do what is most humanizing and life-giving (i.e., 'true') for all" (p. 9). Throughout the book, *wisdom* is used as a synonym for *conation*.

Self-consciously drawing upon other praxis pedagogies, such as Paulo Freire's "conscientization," Groome's conative religious education is a praxis-based approach that seeks to involve participants in critical reflection upon and transformative activity within their particular religious contexts. In a dense description of "shared Christian praxis," Groome summarizes it as

> a participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their sociocultural reality, have access together to Christian Story/Vision, and personally appropriate it in community with the creative intent of renewed praxis in Christian faith toward God's reign for all creation. (p. 135)

The holistic framework with which Groome is working demands irreducible complexity. But Groome lays out each com-

ponent in a clear and articulate fashion. Throughout the book, Groome repeatedly reminds us of the thread that weaves the whole together: that knowing is united with being in human praxis. Knowing holistically means that we reflect upon the whole of our being in the world, and that all our knowing is intrinsically related to our being. The implication is that knowing God is interrelated with our praxis.

Groome's anthropological epistemic ontology is primarily a praxis-based hermeneutic in which human praxis and the Christian Story/Vision are the "sources." Following a method similar to David Tracy's critical correlation, human praxis and the Christian Story/Vision are correlated so that a critical appropriation of new meaning and Christian praxis is possible.

Though the explicit objective of Groome's shared praxis approach is to foster "dialogue and conversation" (p. 114), it is significant that he does not subject his own epistemology to a critical debate with the most viable alternative epistemology in contemporary theology and philosophy, that of critical realism. Variations of a theological critical realist position can be found in K. Barth, T. F. Torrance, J. Moltmann, von Balthasar, W. Pannenberg, and others. Despite their differences, each of these theologians holds that ontology itself must refer beyond anthropology to the ultimate reality of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. Here Groome's epistemic ontology is theologically inadequate.

While Groome acknowledges that an "incarnational principle" (p. 8, 436–441) underlines a Christian epistemology, in the end, his shared praxis approach cannot account for the "dynamics, sources, and reliability of human knowing" (p. 7) of God. His hermeneutic of "shared faith" is a closed, anthropocentric system with its ultimate points of reference being textually derived meaning and human praxis. Theologically speaking, biblical texts cannot be ends in themselves; they should function semantically to signify the revelation of God in Christ, witnessed to in the scriptures yet transcendentally beyond the scriptures. Likewise, human praxis should always refer beyond itself to the life, death, and

resurrection of Christ. Certainly, biblical texts and praxis figure prominently in religious knowing and being, but not as "foundational" sources. In a truly incarnational pedagogical approach, theological knowing must proceed *through* texts and human praxis to the ultimate reality of the incarnation and the ever-present activity of God in the Holy Spirit.

Despite these rather strong critical remarks, I strongly recommend *Sharing Faith* to Christian educators, practical theologians, and educational practitioners who seek an articulate version of a liberative approach to pastoral and educational ministries. I hope this text will provoke a much-needed debate on theological epistemology and ontology among theologians and practitioners.

—ROBERT K. MARTIN
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Acknowledgments

"Is There Joy Before Morning? 'Dangerous Memory' in the Work of Sharon Welch and Johann Baptist Metz"

The first version of this paper was written for Dr. Mark Kline Taylor's "Theory and Praxis" doctoral seminar, Princeton Theological Seminary, in January 1992. I would like to thank Dr. Taylor for his guidance, particularly in directing me to the work of Metz.

—CYNTHIA L. RIGBY

Faith, Power, and Politics: Political Ministry in Mainline Churches. By Audrey R. Chapman. The Pilgrim Press. 1991.

This book review originated in a "Breakfast with an Author" session at the Society of Christian Ethics Annual Meeting in January 1993. I am grateful to Dr. Audrey Chapman and to all participants for a lively discussion.

—REINHILDE RUPRECHT

Contributors

CARLOS F. CARDOZA ORLANDI is a third-year student in the history department at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., pursuing the Ph.D. degree. He is specializing in missions, ecumenics, and the history of religions and is currently writing a dissertation entitled, "Latin America: Christian Land or Missionary Territory? The Missiological Debate from Edinburgh 1910 to Tambaram 1938." He is particularly interested in Christianity in Latin America and the Caribbean and in other religious expressions in the Latin continent.

DAVID M. FREEDHOLM is a fourth-year student in the biblical studies department at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., pursuing the Ph.D. degree. He is specializing in Pauline theology and is currently writing a dissertation on Pauline ethics.

WILLIAM N. A. GREENWAY, JR. is a third-year student in the theology department at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., pursuing the Ph.D. degree. He is specializing in philosophy and theology.

BETH Y. LANGSTAFF is a second-year student in the history department at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., pursuing the Ph.D. degree. She is specializing in the history of doctrine

and is currently planning to write a dissertation on Reformed views of the miraculous.

ANGELLA M. PAK is a second-year student in the practical theology department at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., pursuing the Ph.D. degree. She is currently planning to write a dissertation on the theology of Atonement with respect to guilt and shame.

CYNTHIA L. RIGBY is a third-year student in the theology department at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., pursuing the Ph.D. degree. She is specializing in systematic theology and is currently writing a dissertation on how hope can empower the work of social justice.